
BEYOND THE BREAKWATER

Venturing into Posthuman
Philosophical Waters

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TO THE HESITANT PHILOSOPHER *

If philosophy's myths to philosophy's truth,
Pros and cons with right and wrong,
Traditionalism, existentialism and hidden wonder,
If wisdom, Gnosticism and things unknown;
In all their human thought retold,
But not exactly in the ancient way,
Can please, as in my day,
The wiser youngsters of to-day:

– So be it, and read on!

If not; If studious youth no longer craves,
That ancient light recast,
Plato, Aristotle and Thomas of Aquino,
Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger.

– So be it. And may we,

In all our ignorance share the grave,
Where these and all their musings lie!

(* With a tip o' the hat to Robert Louis Stevenson)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PHILOSOPHY

1.	My rationale for this book	1
2.	The stagnation of philosophy	8
3.	The philosopher in community	10
4.	Philosophical dehellenization	15
5.	Philosophy and science	16

THEOLOGY

6.	Introduction to theology	21
7.	Theological formulation	24
8.	Theology outside a guild	27
9.	A personal process of formulating posthuman theology	34

POSTHUMANITY

10.	A posthuman philosophical blueprint	38
11.	Posthuman phenomenological consciousness (as part of a posthuman philosophical blueprint)	42
12.	A process of posthuman theologizing	51
13.	A posthuman consciousness (as part of a process of posthuman theologizing)	56
14.	A posthuman consciousness of God	60
15.	The spirit of the Christ in posthuman consciousness	64
16.	Deepening posthuman consciousness	66
17.	Preliminaries to posthuman thresholds	68
18.	Posthuman identity	75

LIFTING THE SHADES ON KNOWLEDGE

19.	A “creed for life”	87
20.	Following the computerized thread	90
21.	Becoming conscious of the presence of God	93
22.	My evolving conscious understanding	99
23.	Private judgment: Catholic and Protestant	101

24.	Culture	103
25.	Evolutionary philosophy	104
26.	Responsible freedom	106
27.	Postscript	107
28.	A creed for posthuman belief	109
	About the author	110

NOTES

On the Title

Contemporary philosophical contemplation may be compared to a cruise about a well-chartered harbor. Familiar philosophical landmarks are seen from a different vantage points, but they remain familiar landmarks all the same. In other words, the philosophical charts of Hellenism provide the template for a familiar cruise within traditional philosophical waters. In this book, I venture out into the less familiar waters beyond the philosophical breakwater, as it were, taking along with me the traditional philosophical charts of Hellenism. However, I test their applicability and their accuracy in unknown philosophical waters where, thus far, few other have gone.

Laïcité

Philosophically, *laïcité* is a State, as well as an Ecclesial, democratic movement. The Constitution of France confirms the principle of *laïcité* in the 1958 revision. The Church references the principle in the documents of Vatican II (1962-1965). In the State it is a method of reflection on a citizen's freedom of conscience. In the Church *laïcité* is a reflective movement on the interpretation of Revelation and expression of the faith that began in the 20th Century. The State is composed of citizens and the Church is composed of the People of God. In both communities *laïcité* is an historical movement that leaves the past behind and constructs a future appropriate to the human ends of each institution. *Laïcité* is not one human movement among others, but it is the acknowledged right for all humans to have opinions within the State and within the Church. Within the State *laïcité* is not a private conviction, but a neutral principle that allows all opinions subject to respect for public order. Within the Church it is the principle of conscience that accords the laity its proper role in discerning divine Revelation. The political order is based on the sovereignty of the citizens of the state, which itself does not recognize or sponsor worship or religious services, nor does the State regulate the internal functioning of religious organizations. The Church, constituted by the People of God, affirms the State's neutrality vis-à-vis religion and its autonomy in governmental affairs subject to respect for, and service to, global humanity in its individual and collective expressions.

The phenomenological method is not the diametric opposite of the ontological;
It is a more comprehensive one than the latter,
whose merits it preserves and whose inadequacies it tries to remedy.

Leslie Dewart

§

PHILOSOPHY

1. MY RATIONALE FOR THIS BOOK

Why do I read Philosophers? I suppose the immediate answer to that question that comes to mind for most individuals is that “I want to learn something,” or perhaps to know what other philosophers know. Such were my reasons at one time. However, today (in my retirement years) that is not the case. Rather, I read other philosophers to confirm what I already know, not so much to know what they know, although that does occur also. That means that I discover if I am in accord or in discord with the perspective of the philosopher I am reading. In short, I am already somewhat conscious of an issue before I search out a particular philosopher to read. The “inquiring-minds-want-to-know” phase of my earlier philosophical reading has passed and now it is a matter of confirming the truthfulness or authenticity of that which I am aware, but not with the aid of a classical philosophical education. That is to say, I ask myself, am I conscious to the fullest degree humanly possible?

Posthuman consciousness does not totally replace humanistic consciousness in Western philosophy, but rather, co-exists as a *philosophical attitude* along-side humanism and other various philosophical fons (in the archival sense) in current philosophical thinking. A philosophical attitude is a continuous conscious stance in one’s culture and is successor to mythical interpretation by Western individuals. Thus, elements of humanist philosophy will be evident in a posthuman philosophy. I envision philosophy, humanist as well as posthumanist, not as a formal discipline reserved to universities, but as a natural human intellectual activity characteristic of all critically thinking persons.

One might argue that I have become a “disciple,” as it were, of Leslie Dewart (1922-2009) in order to interpret “the master’s” approach to understanding philosophical consciousness. To my mind, one is a true disciple of another philosopher only to the

extent that one understands and is convinced by the master's arguments. But I am not a disciple in that strict sense. Rather than accept Dewart's insights as an intellectual *fait accompli*, I attempt a further interpretation of his insights by following through on his reasoning and critically examining his arguments.

The human mind is the active faculty for consciousness and thinking that makes us aware of ourselves and our environment. Within my conscious mind notions precede their written expression. Notions are in my mind, before they are presented on paper. History shows that earlier written expressions of ideas were often altered when understood philosophically by later cultures, the "original" idea having been expressed in myth or poetry. Yet, not all human mythical ideas have reached written status (of the more ancient philosophical writing only fragments remain) and the number that are not extant is unknown. Philosophy was undertaken mentally, or notionally, before it was written and written texts (often in Greek or Latin) were only in the hands of educated individuals and often not even an entire corpus was available to them. Nor was the entire *corpus* of ideas of any particular philosopher accepted by the members of a school or understood by the savants outside a particular school of thought. There is no doubt that philosophy initially meant theology, before its current name and its appearance in the academy.

Presently, I am of the opinion that philosophy will function as "theology without God" in posthuman thinking. Unlike theology proper, no act of faith is needed to establish the authority of philosophical authors. A simple appeal to reason suffices. In the West, a canon of philosophical writings was established (by the academics) which became normative thus founding the principles of Western philosophical thinking. In the Western context, reason had become its own guarantor. Philosophy, in a posthuman context, needs interpretation as to its exact meaning. Authority, in the posthuman context resides in the agency of individual philosophers, and only by virtue of delegation in the agency of a community. Being autonomous, each philosopher must be on guard for a faulty translation of texts, the obscurity of texts (that may require explanation through other texts) and, as well, a personal lack of knowledge concerning the complexity of written

languages, or a failure to distinguish between literal and figurative senses. No community interprets on behalf of philosophers.

Having come to appreciate the philosophical influence of Leslie Dewart, my intention is to provide the critical philosopher with some insights arising in my undergraduate years that have remained with me to the writing of this book. I place my account in the public forum because there may be other philosophers or theologians interested in knowing of my experience. In doing so I present these insights not as a chronological or historical sequence of events detailing the stages of my philosophical journey. Rather, as a stimulus I invite the reader to revisit and reconsider issues in his or her own thinking. Identifying dates and occasions marking the various philosophical movements of conversion when I stopped believing “this” and began believing “that,” is not my intent here. Rather, I identify those occasions when various conscious realizations converged in my thinking which presented a moment of phenomenological insight that changed what I believed. My personal understanding of philosophy is that philosophy is an intellectual and contemplative activity by which I make sense of my environment. This intellectual and contemplative activity has also provided insights that have brought me into a posthuman understanding of theology. That is to say, philosophy and theology must collaborate since philosophy offers a higher intelligibility and understanding for theology than insight nursed on folklore. In short, philosophy offers a higher hermeneutic.

Like many other students of philosophy throughout history, I began questioning my beliefs during my undergraduate years while studying philosophy according to the classical syllabus. I did not, however, immediately and totally reject classical philosophy. In practice, I took what “worked” from classical philosophy and rejected what was irrelevant to my experience at the time. Today, unlike my undergraduate years, any rejection of what is irrelevant to my experience is critically thought out. What is relevant is consciously maintained. Over time, I have come to appreciate Christopher Macann’s perspective on the philosophical concept of being. It is not that phenomena reveal or disclose being or even what it means “to be.” Rather, the opposite is the case. Being, or

what it means “to be,” discloses or reveals phenomena.¹ I no longer consider the legacy of Hellenistic ontology as the necessary philosophical substrate common to all human thinking and experience. I once thought that to be the case, however. Now, I recognize that Hellenistic ontology is only one interpretation within the evolutionary process of philosophical perspectives that constitute human thinking.

Like many philosophers in the Catholic tradition I sought knowledge of a metaphysical reality, that is, God through transcendental philosophy. At one time, Neo-Thomism satisfied my quest. In the initial years of my thinking, I accepted uncritically what was truly real was knowable through formal *a priori* ideological structures. That is, my experience was interpreted through Platonic idealism. I later realized that my experience neither revealed nor confirmed that such structures existed. I had presumed them to be “there.” Eventually, and largely due to Leslie Dewart’s philosophical influence, I accepted that there are no *a priori* structures of reality “out there.” Thus, I abandoned classical ontological ideology and undertook a critical self-reflection on my experience from a phenomenological perspective.

Critical self-reflection from a phenomenological perspective revealed a new consciousness, enabling me to understand and make sense, that is, give meaning to my experience. It was my arrival at this stage of assigning meaning that, according to Kristina Stöckl, marked the moment I consciously entered modernity.² The notion of modernity, as a philosophical concept, refers to one’s critical reflection on experience. Modernity, then, was the context in which I found myself engaged in the task of having to make sense of, or give meaning to, my experience. Once I understood this, I came to question seriously whether or not the scholastic philosophical idealism that I inherited from my Western education actually existed independently of my experience. I concluded that it did not. Rather, it is more accurate to say that I

¹ “Being and Becoming” in *Philosophy Now* Issue 61, 2007 (<https://philosophynow.org>).

² *Community after Totalitarianism: The Eastern Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity*. Doctor of Political Science Dissertation (European University Institute) 2007.

intentionally constructed notions through an awareness of relationships with the world around me. Such deliberate intentional constructions, I soon realized, led me to posthuman philosophical thinking.

In my posthuman philosophical thinking I distinguish between my being (a static concept) and my becoming (a dynamic concept), yet I am not able to separate my being from my becoming. They are one and the same activity. As well, I am conscious that my being and my becoming constitute a unity and I understand them as equi-primordial. In short, my being was always present to my becoming.

One question, upon which I reflected in my posthuman understanding, is whether or not to undertake consciously to construct critically my life-world, or, choose to remain satisfied with pre-critical thinking. Having rejected traditional Hellenistic understanding and having undertaken a posthuman philosophical perspective, I thereby transcend Hellenistic metaphysical theory. That is to say that posthuman metaphysical understanding is not a variant of classical metaphysical ideology. Rather, posthuman metaphysics addresses existential phenomena in the human being's life-world notionally, not through the idealism of classical speculative metaphysics. Posthuman metaphysics is a contemporary philosophy of mind. Thus, in posthuman philosophy, I encounter a different problem. The problem is not whether the world will change or whether it will remain the same as classical metaphysics suggests. The real problem is whether the world will change of its own accord, without my participation, or whether it will be changed deliberately, consciously because of my participation.

I change my world through changing my relationships existentially. These existential relationships define the conscious limits of my life-world. While there is no possibility of retaining the fixed conceptions of my past, the shaping of my future life-world does require an analysis of the circumstances of the past without reliving them. In analyzing the past, I am conscious of myself, not as a static being, but as an active and free agent in the presence of other active and free agents. The presence of God (not a free agent, *as such*), constitutes the boundary of my existence. In organizing the future of my life-world, I have chosen neither a

traditional, nor an updated philosophical perspective such as Neo-Thomism. It was learning to define myself through a non-hellenized posthuman philosophy that I came to appreciate the rationale of the process I use to construct the future of my life-world. In short, I realized that I was at a threshold of evolutionary posthuman thinking.

Any philosopher who assumes that every entity is *necessarily* constructed as a self-contained unit rejects the possibility of evolutionary growth and remains within the static Hellenic mindset and closed to future development. In organizing my life-world, the opposite is the case. That is, I participate in my evolution by reflecting, engaging and consciously growing while facing an indeterminate future.

The posthuman dehellenization of my belief does not mean the rejection of Hellenistic philosophy and the substitution of another more appropriate philosophy as if the two were not related. The term dehellenization is not a negative term, that is, it does not mean simply un-hellenization. It is a positive term. I undertake the process of dehellenization as the conscious creation of the future construction of my life-world. Reviewing my intellectual history, I have come to the realization that the task which awaits me is not the dismantling of one metaphysical system to reconstruct an alternative metaphysical system in its place. Rather the task is to transcend any metaphysical system that reflects another world. Transcending any metaphysical system is to be done through individuating myself within that which is real. That is, individuating myself within *the reality beyond being* of which I am conscious, i.e., God.

It is understandable that St Thomas thought that the scholastic way of thinking was the only way of thinking given his context. However, I am conscious of the fact that there is no necessary context or methodology that I must employ in philosophizing about reality beyond being. As well, there is no philosophical methodology that is natural or privileged in interpreting reality beyond being. My life-world is one of increasing personal existential responsibility and, as such, my task is to find an appropriate intellectual and philosophical methodology for the interpretation of my posthuman experience.

As I reflect on my experience, I become conscious that the contingency of my physical being is problematic. Thus, I attempt to overcome this problematic through a holistic understanding. A deliberate holistic consciousness is rooted in my desire to give meaning to my life-world. Since I live in a community of (religious) faith, a problem for me is whether or not I must assign reasons that demonstrate that (religious) faith is required of everyone. The answer is no. While I am conscious of my particular creative freedom, I need not presume that the same degree of creative freedom is necessary for all. There is a difference of degree in the creative freedom of human beings. Others who also have unique experiences will assign different meaning to their (religious) faith experience. Through phenomenological philosophy, I realize that any outcome of my freedom is not predetermined, as I once thought. I am not a fatalist. That is why I consciously and freely attempt to create a future life-world through the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.

Because of the dissatisfaction with classical philosophy, I now subscribe to a philosophy that is suitable to my increasingly maturing theological thinking in order to give proper expression to my understanding of God's presence to me. My theological maturing has to do with the epistemological and metaphysical questions which traditionally grounded Western theology and belief. In short, my theological crisis was and is philosophical. Therefore, my need is for a deepening philosophy of consciousness to clarify what I already know, rather than a need for an increase in the quantity of intellectual information. A deepening of consciousness necessitates a re-conceptualized understanding of relationships within my faith community and my life-world. In the process of deepening my consciousness, or the reconceptualization of my life-world, what I have become conscious of is that all phenomena are real, but not all reality is phenomenological. There is reality beyond phenomenological being.

I am conscious that in expressing my dehellenized philosophy, I employ language personally, but not privately. When I think, or talk about my life-world, I create a relationship to the physical world that is "there." In this relationship, I do not merely relate to my life-world and the physical world that is there, but I *self-relate* to my life-world and the physical world that is there. I become

consciously related as a self to the physical world that is there, that is, as a subject who knows of his relationship to his life-world and the physical world that is there. Thus, what I achieve through my language and thought is the creation of my identity through relating my self to both myself and the physical world that is there.

Remembering is that characteristic of consciousness which accounts for the fact that the more I am actually aware, the more I become potentially aware. Thus, when I remember anything, I potentially expand my conscious horizon or increase my awareness. Consequently, if I were to accept uncritically any pre-given conceptual and cultural form of theological dogma, I would be preventing any conscious expansion of my theological horizon or increased awareness for theologizing. If I were to accept any pre-given form of theological dogma, characteristic of Hellenism, that would obscure any meaning which it once revealed and my theological crisis would remain unresolved. As to my rationale for writing this book I attempt a *philosophical* resolution to my *theological* crisis in the face of a posthuman future.

2. THE STAGNATION OF PHILOSOPHY

A presumption I make in this book is that Western philosophy has stagnated. To date, it has failed to achieve sufficient independence from the scientific attitude to attract the attention of the bright minds that contemplate upon the mysteries of life. I hold this perspective to be adequately demonstrated, through the work of Leslie Dewart, to justify accepting it as a point of philosophical fact. Summarily he writes:

Soon after philosophy was revived in modern times by René Descartes and given an empirical orientation by John Locke, anglophone philosophy ceased to make much progress in its understanding of the human mind and its conscious quality. Many philosophers today are likely to agree that, regretfully, although the attempts of modern philosophy to fathom the mind have never come to a standstill, generation after generation the most promising beginnings have in the fullness of time invariably foundered. Quite to the contrary,

however, on a very different issue “a Great Divide”³ bisects today’s philosophical community into irreconcilable factions: is it true, as the advocates of “cognitivism” maintain, that with the advent of this school of thought the stagnation of philosophy and its inability to deal effectively with consciousness have come to an end?

The proponents of philosophical cognitivism judge that modern philosophy, having enlisted in the service of cognitive science, has finally come of age and now faces a bright future. The reason, they say, is that cognitivism has at long last discovered how to study human cognition as what it truly is, namely, as one among many possible “realizations” or “instantiations” of the “mentality” of processes that can be observed not only in human beings and infrahuman animals, but even among non-living entities such as computing machines. This, they say, is necessary, because it is the only way in which philosophy can avoid dualism. The more traditionally-minded amongst us, however, continue to uphold the autonomous, science-independent nature and unique value of philosophical knowledge, as well as the empirically-based conviction that human organisms exhibit mental functions that, on the one hand, are vested in exclusively material organisms, but which nonetheless, on the other, are truly real and conscious as well as distinct from, and irreducible to, the organism’s non-mental functions. Now, if this should turn out to be true — and time will probably tell — philosophical cognitivism, like many other philosophical shooting stars that have arisen and fallen in the last two hundred years, is likely to dry out and ultimately evaporate. But that is yet to come, if ever it will. In the meantime, those of us who contest the validity of cognitivism are challenged to account for the causes of what we take to be the stagnation of modern philosophy throughout modern times. How did it come about? Why is there no end of it in sight? What is the remedy, if there is one? And how should philosophy reorient itself once it overthrows the obstacles that bar its way to progress? ... As for the

³ David J. Chalmers (1966:xiii) *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* Oxford University Press.

suppositions that I propose here concerning cognition, reality, and causality as replacements of the traditional versions of these concepts, I recognize they may amount only to an uncertain and unhelpful step towards the reconstruction of modern philosophy. Nevertheless, if this work arouses the interest of open-minded scholars and stimulates them to investigate in depth the questions I raise here but which I raise here only superficially, and if it moves them to reset the compass of philosophy on a more promising course than I have been able to suggest, my fondest objectives in writing this book will have been attained. ⁴

I accept that the issues of cognition, reality, and causality will take on new challenges of interpretation in the posthuman context. Philosophers in the posthuman context will carry elements Dewart's thought a bit further and apply them to posthumanism and transhumanism which are yet to gain greater philosophical expression. Currently their expression is dominated by the fields of science fiction, futurology, and contemporary art, and minimally influenced by critical philosophy. I view posthumanism and transhumanism as positive philosophical attitudes, designed to enhance the understanding of the human person, not as philosophical ideologies reflecting a dissatisfaction of humanism, and undertake a phenomenological approach, as opposed to an epistemological approach, in their philosophical interpretation. The negative aspect of posthumanism, to my mind, is a carryover from a postmodern attitude characteristic of studies in postmodern theology. ⁵

3. THE PHILOSOPHER IN COMMUNITY

The traditional conventions that Western philosophers have developed and designed to protect them from anxiety in the human condition are likely to be inadequate and unsuccessful in the

⁴ Leslie Dewart (2016:5) *Hume's Challenge and the Renewal of Modern Philosophy* privately published posthumously.

⁵ Griffin, David R (1989:xi) Introduction to SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought in *Varieties of Postmodern Theology* State University of New York Press.

posthuman world. New philosophical safeguards against anxiety, characteristic of posthuman phenomenology, not scholasticism, need to be properly formulated. However, their effectiveness may be somewhat limited within contemporary Western philosophical thought. The safeguards of traditional religious ideology, having been expressed in classical terms within conventional Christianity for many ages, may be the cause. However, for many philosophers they no longer work. These classical forms of expression, conceptions, and customs are rooted in the world of a Greco-Roman-Germanic civilization that has deep roots in ancient Hellenic philosophy. I suggest that profound changes due to posthuman philosophical specialization will bring about great changes in interpreting conventional Christianity. As an example, the shift from an objective to a subjective point of view in interpreting personal experience accounts for the fact that many Christian churches have become humanized (secularized) institutions in which humans, not God, have become the primary focus.

Posthuman philosophical speculation seems to lie outside the official Catholic tradition in the interpretation of Revelation. Posthuman theological philosophy seems to be regarded by the official Catholic magisterium as incapable of assisting in interpreting Revelation. However, Pope Benedict XVI's comment calling for a broadening of our concept of human reason suggests that all philosophical interpretation, including posthuman interpretation, might be integrated into official Catholic teaching.⁶ It must be remembered that the philosopher's job is to inquire into experience, not to interpret Revelation. Interpretation of Revelation is the task of the theologian. The posthuman theological philosopher's investigations are made within an existential order of human life and not from inquiring into the depths of Revelation that disclose the mind of God, as it were. The fact is that humanistic philosophers, nor posthuman philosophers are central to church's faith-life but the *sensus fidelium* is. In other words, the Church could get along without a class of philosophers but it could

⁶ "Faith and Reason and the University - Memories and Reflections" 2006 Lecture before representatives of Science at the University of Regensburg.

not get along without the *sensus fidelium*, which, in fact, may be considered as the conscience of the Church.⁷

Evidence suggesting this is to be found in the church regarding the so-called Modernist Movement whose name was coined by the church authorities, not the philosophers of the time. Controversial issues in religion, characterized by the Modernist movement, were introduced by the new scientific knowledge of the late 19th and early 20th centuries into the American Church and were often resisted at the pastoral or practical level. However, the same controversial issues introduced into the Church in Italy, France and England were challenged at the level of philosophical and theoretical argument.⁸ To complicate matters, the Italian, French and English critical philosophers could not appreciate the non-metaphysical or practical language of the North American philosophers and theologians. Thus, the Europeans tended to look upon American theology as somewhat suspicious. This created a dichotomy between North American and Continental philosophical thought. It was the case in England and the Continent that liberal Catholics attempted to integrate the new scientific knowledge within the teaching authority of the Church. That is to say, that the so-called Modernists at the time attempted to reconcile the conflict between the Church and new scientific knowledge by up-dating the meaning of doctrine, dogma and Church authority.

Unlike philosophy, theology is a process involving God's self-revelation. For the Italian and French Modernists, the theological study of divinity was a natural activity that included a life of prayer. Many Modernist theologians accepted that a saintly life replaced a scholastic philosophical understanding as the proper interpreter of revelation. As George Tyrrell (1861-1909) reminds us, "Theology is not the product of the spiritual life of the faithful,

⁷ Cf. Alberigo, Giuseppe, "Facteurs de laïcité au Concile Vatican II" *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* tome 74, fascicule 2, 2000.

⁸ Maude Petre (1863-1942) notes that democracy, although not a religious concept, was a practical element of the Modernist movement. "The problems with which it dealt were those suggested by the political transformations of the day, regarding such questions as property and its rights; class distinctions and their possible disappearance; the future of socialism; and above all, the respective value of this-world and other-world ideals." *Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits* T.C. & E C. Jack (1918:69) & Reprint Facsimile Publisher (2020:69).

but of the intellectual life of the Schools.”⁹ In the time of George Tyrrell, among certain academics, there was a trend away from reinforcing the doctrinal and dogmatic teaching of the Church by theologians. The new trend was to engage in a scientific religious philosophy and to develop a methodology to serve the existential needs of the faithful in the Church. This trend was minimally successful. To this day, classical philosophical construction in the mind of the magisterium has remained the dominant foundation of theology.

Future posthuman theological philosophy, if it is to be a human discipline (particularly within the universities), must take into account all religious phenomena, not just Christianity. Posthuman theological philosophy will be a labour of reason that recognizes Revelation from the Jewish, Christian and Islamic perspectives. Any philosophy is an after-thought of human experience, that is, a reflective exercise in human consciousness. Thus, to my mind, from a posthuman theological philosophical perspective it will matter little that Christianity has developed in Orthodox, Roman, Reformed and Protestant traditions. Within a posthuman theology all Christians are potentially able to share in a philosophical consciousness leading to a new expression and practice of the faith.

To this end, I suggest that a phenomenological philosophy, in a posthuman context, potentially brings about an end to the theological tension that exists among Eastern Orthodoxy, Rome and the Reformation. I suggest that phenomenological philosophy in a posthuman context will accomplish this by overcoming the dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity and recognize each perspective as equiprimordial in human consciousness. Thus, by ending this dichotomy, a new Christian consciousness may be neither characteristically Orthodox, nor Roman, nor Reformed. This presents an exciting possibility upon which posthuman religious philosophers may wish to venture.

I suggest that the survival of orthodox Christianity requires that philosophers and theologians take a posthuman approach to interpretation otherwise they are of no benefit to the Christian community. This is especially true at the University level where

⁹ *The Church and the Future* (1910:157) Priory Press.

theologians fulfill their task of inquiry into the rationality of the faith. In the contemporary Western context, with its emphasis on the corporality of the individual, there is a danger that a believing community may be understood as less than necessary for one's spiritual life. This is an erroneous supposition. One must not forget that it is through the believing community that new generations are introduced to a faith-life. It must not be forgotten that a task of the philosopher is the analysis of public life and of private life. However, it must be remembered that sociological or psychological aspects of the philosopher's task are secondary, even though they may have a religious focus.

Posthuman philosophy, as an activity of the mind, may be directed to a religious purpose. Tertullian, the Carthaginian theologian, who died circa 230 A. D., spoke of the "natural man," simple, rude, uncultured, untaught, and not yet ruined by Greek education, as being *anima naturaliter Christiana*. Tertullian invited individuals to return to their own religious experience since experience is prior to any theory. In their religious experience they could explore their spiritual life in order to find the Christian route to God. An earlier philosophical thinker, Socrates, in his dialectical approach, desired to help clarify the thinking of poets, politicians and whomever he met in the market place, both young and old. Yet, Socrates did not initiate a system of philosophy. Rather, he undertook a responsible approach to thinking about abstract ideas. While it may be true that for many of our contemporaries God has died in the Western culture of the 19th Century, God may yet return in our posthuman culture understood through the use of new images and new symbols. Interpreting these new images and symbols would be the task of the posthuman *religious* philosopher, from a sociological perspective. It is to be remembered also, that the task of the 21st Century posthuman *theological* philosopher is to interpret from a faith perspective. Posthuman thinkers will come to know, through their experience, that there is no final philosophy or theology. Thus, the work of the posthuman theologian will be conceived differently than in the days of the formation of the medieval theological systems. The task of the posthuman theological philosopher will be to make known the abiding truths of reasoned belief to a new generation. The principle merit and usefulness of a posthuman theological philosopher will be to

satisfy the faith of the believer living in a future dehellenized church.

4. PHILOSOPHICAL DEHELLENIZATION

A dehellenized philosophy is not a fixed philosophical system. It is a continual process of the deliberate re-evaluation of experience. Thus, it is a dynamic process. The dehellenization process helped me to recognize that my Christian and secular experience had been, for a time, the same. There was no need to distinguish between them. It was easy, therefore, for me to think that to be a Christian meant living uncritically in the Western social and cultural order that I inherited. It took some time for me to realize that this social and cultural order was, in fact, the legacy of a Hellenized philosophical tradition.

Reading the works of some contemporary Western philosophers, I realized that this Hellenized philosophical understanding was also a serious concern to them. Given the realization that their Hellenized philosophical understanding was undergoing critical re-evaluation, they often seemed threatened and wrote rebuttals to any dehellenization in favour of the classical approach. Realizing their bias, I ceased to follow their lead and rejected their efforts at rebuttal and sought instead to review my self-understanding and develop an appropriate approach to my philosophical thinking given my experience.

In light of the Catholic philosophical perspective of Vatican II, I favored *ressourcement* over *aggiornamento*. I favoured a re-visiting of classical philosophical sources, the result of which was not merely the updating of philosophical language. Returning to those sources I was able to clarify their meaning and contrast their significance in light of contemporary usage. As a philosopher and theologian living at the end of the classical philosophical age, I pondered what was to be my philosophical role in any new understanding arising out of my Christian and secular experience. My conclusion was that only a return to, and critique of, the sources of Western philosophical thinking could provide a satisfactory readjustment of my thinking.

The cultural and social context in which I live is organized on the basis of an interpretation of the collective experiences of the community which, naturally, includes me. Any reorganization of culture and society occurs slowly. I realize that I am among those Christians who call for a collective re-interpretation based on personal experience. However, I am often not taken seriously by many of my contemporaries. Their lack of interest, I suspect, is due to their philosophical bias which favours an *a priori* classical belief which they have retained from their Hellenized philosophical past.

In the process of philosophical dehellenization, I soon realized that if answers to my questions were provided to me beforehand through well-meaning and authoritative instructors there was no need for me to undertake any personal critical investigation with respect to my experience. I could remain philosophically passive and accept uncritically their ideas. But I soon realized that, rather than simply accept my intellectual inheritance without question, I needed to acknowledge my own intellectual responsibility and become an agent for change with respect to myself and subsequently within my environment. Thus, my problem became not just how to update my understanding, but how to formulate my philosophical convictions free from a Hellenized philosophy. Thus, I needed to plan a future that was not a repetition, or variation of my past experience. But this could only be done through a new methodology, one not dependent on a classical inheritance, but phenomenologically undertaken. However, what was to become of my understanding of science in this dehellenized methodology?

5. PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

When, in my early years, I encountered individuals from various cultures who often held beliefs different from mine, as well as differing among themselves, I was frequently frustrated by these contrasting and discordant opinions. However, while in university I delved more deeply into these differing opinions and it eventually became apparent to me that Western philosophers favoured a particular interpretive perspective rooted in ancient Greek philosophical understanding. In hindsight, I recall that this ancient

Greek philosophy often failed to contribute satisfactory answers to my questions.

I am also aware that, in those years, there was an optimistic belief in the progress of the sciences, but that nothing similar had occurred in philosophy. I wondered why science had advanced and philosophy appeared to remain perennially the same. The answer to that question I found in the contrast between the respective methodologies and objectives of philosophy and science. Looking into the historical development of science and philosophy, I discovered that originally there was no adversarial understanding between the two. Initially, philosophers and scientists recognized each other as searching for the same thing, that is, the truth, although each was searching from a different point of view. In time, however, scientists did separate from philosophers and their respective methodologies did take on different founding principles and their terms of reference became less understandable and acceptable to each other. This resulted in Western academics deciding that the discipline of philosophy, unlike science, was not a system of proofs founded on propositions. That is, philosophy was not a science, but an art.

I recall that in my early studies I was disposed to view the relationship between the two, not as antagonistic as some academics did, but as complimentary. I recognized that science and philosophy both provided some answers to the deeper questions I had about life, but from different points of view. In my perspective, the data presented by a scientist provided the subject matter for a philosopher to contemplate. In other words, the goal of a philosopher is to clarify and specify the meaning of facts provided by the scientist.

Unlike classical philosophers, however, phenomenological philosophers, take a different approach to understanding meaning which cannot be taught as an objective system of knowledge, as is the case in the West through classical Greek philosophy. Rather, within phenomenology the experience of the philosopher leads to the assignment of meaning, even mysteriously, to the facts. That is, the phenomenological philosopher adopts a subjective interpretive stance towards life, rather than accepts an objective and normative system of ideas. As a phenomenological philosopher I assign meaning and significance to my experience from a subjective point

of view, but not, however, in isolation from the community in which I live. The meaning and significance of my experience and that of my community are related through an inter-subjective awareness.

I find modern scientific (techno-digital) techniques awkward in accounting for personal meaning in any sense of agency or satisfactory interpretation. Techno-digital technologies, of themselves, cannot provide any theory to account for the meaning and significance of human life. Although scientifically-minded sociologists attempted this in the 1960's. The authors of the Preface in *The Theories of Society* wrote: "The selections we have brought together document what we believe to constitute a major revolution in scholarly and professional thinking about the nature and determinants of human conduct in society. ... Like the theory of evolution [this major revolution] was centered in one scientific discipline, but its repercussions have begun to ramify through a major part of the whole intellectual world."¹⁰ Since assigning meaning in life is not the purpose of scientific technique, another discipline is needed. This discipline is phenomenological philosophy.

Today, instead of classical philosophy, I undertake a phenomenological approach in assigning meaning to my experience — something infrahumans and robots cannot do. However, there seems to be a conscious resistance in the contemporary Anglo-American philosophical community to phenomenological philosophy. Phenomenological philosophy, also known as Continental Philosophy, is rarely favoured professionally in American universities. Rather, the teaching that appears in many Western universities is a retention of the classical perspective, as Shannon Vallor states in her book.¹¹

¹⁰ Parsons, T., Shils, E., Naegle, K., and Pitts, J. (1961:xxi) *Theories of Society* Free Press of Glencoe.

¹¹ "This book recommends a classical solution: an energetic (perhaps even desperate) collective effort to reinvest our culture in the habits of moral self-cultivation and education for technomoral wisdom" (Vallor's italics). *Technology and Virtue: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting* (2016:245) Oxford University Press.

Scientific interpretation requires narrow parameters restricted solely to demonstrable facts, which change in light of new discoveries. I see no such parameters or progress in philosophical interpretation such as I see in scientific interpretation. Rather than philosophical progress, I recognize, in my phenomenological approach, a deepening appreciation of my *conscious* life within the evolutionary process. The questions I have asked myself in these pages arise from interpreting my personal, not private, life-world existentially. Am I experiencing a problem with the philosophical foundations of my knowledge? I asked myself. My experience of the world of scientific facts alone no longer satisfied my curiosity about my life-world. Even though there are various systems of human science (as distinguished from physical science) available to me to explore my intellectual curiosity: sociological, psychological, scientific, etc., none of these systems has been able to adequately express the totality or complexity of my experience of my life-world.¹² However, as I eventually discovered I was able to account for my experience more adequately through a phenomenological philosophy.

Upon finding the traditional approach to philosophical knowledge wanting, I opted for a phenomenological philosophical approach (employing consciousness, not epistemology) to interpret my experience. Phenomenological philosophy, as a means of conscious interpretation, has no boundaries of its own. It is bounded only by the limits of the human mind. Therefore, as a phenomenological philosopher, within my religious experience, God is not the *direct* focus of my philosophical inquiry. Rather, I consciously contemplate phenomena, other than God, in order to reach God, without God. According to Stephen Laycock this notion of reaching God without God was introduced by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) the principal founder of phenomenology.¹³ I

¹² I adopt Strasser's view. "Physical science, in the broadest sense, views man as part of the cosmos, a part that is not essentially different from the rest. Human sciences, on the other hand, are concerned with that which is specifically human." Strasser, Stephen (1963:5) *Phenomenology and the Human Sciences: A Contribution to a New Scientific Ideal* Duquesne University Press.

¹³ Stephen William Laycock and James Hart 1986:171 *Essays in Phenomenological Theology* State University of New York Press.

undertake phenomenological philosophy to interpret my religious experience so that I can consciously assign meaning and significance to my life without requiring the epistemology of the Hellenic philosophers of a bygone age.

I recall that early on in my philosophical contemplation I encountered two significant existential phenomena. First, that I had inherited a religious world-view which I did not make or design. Second, there was no stopping the evolution of this inherited world-view. However, as time went on, I came to understand that I somehow personally directed this evolution to some degree by making appropriate choices. Yet, in fact, my world has remained determined principally by the dominant ideas of ancient Greek philosophy, that are so steeped in contemporary Western society that I am not able to bring about any significant theological change. However, once I adequately understand the limitations of techno-digital science, and the advantages of phenomenological philosophy I hope to restructure my theological understanding appropriate to my needs.

§

THEOLOGY

6. INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

Throughout this book, I cite examples of the changes in my philosophical and theological thinking. To help the reader understand my current theological perspective I offer this introductory passage adapted from Edward Schillebeeckx's *Revelation and Theology*. I have composed a précis of his and made appropriate emendations.

The term theology has, in the course of time, been applied with various meanings to different realities. Initially, the word was used with reference to the mythical stories of the gods.¹⁴ Theologians in this sense were the ancient poets such as Homer (12th to 8th century B.C.?) and Hesiod (circa 700 B.C.), who wrote theogonies [i.e., genealogies of a group of gods], and told the myths of the Olympian gods. Theology, in this sense, was contrasted with meteorology which dealt in a more scientific manner with the divine heavenly bodies. Aristotle (circa 384 B.C.) spoke of theology as poetic myths about the gods. The view that these myths about the gods were simply a mythological form concealing true reference to God gradually

¹⁴ Auguste Sabatier had the same perspective as Schillebeeckx and wrote: "The primitive conception of Nature was animistic. In everything *astonishing*, extraordinary, men used to see the action of the spirits like themselves, with whom their religious imagination peopled the heavens, the earth, the seas. They lived in miracle. ... The word Nature, which has become so familiar and so indispensable to designate the regular course of things, does not exist in primitive languages. One does not meet with it even in the language of the Old Testament. This is because the conception it represents only came into existence later, and by a slow and laborious process, in the philosophy of the Greeks. The cosmos, ordered and harmonious and fixed, is the sublime creation of Hellenic reason" (Sabatier's italics). *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* (1897:69) George H. Doran Co.

became accepted. Plato (circa 428-348 B.C.) consciously dissociated the essential content of these myths from their mythological content. Aristotle also used the word theology with a new meaning or, at least changed its field of application. Making a three-fold division of science (*epistēmē*) into the physical, mathematical, and theological, he raised theology to the level of a philosophical science and made it the “first” form of philosophical thought. This “first philosophy” was concerned with the highest causes of the visible, divine, astral world.

The first sense [of the term theology] lay behind Aristotle’s use of the word which meant ‘to speculate about the gods.’ Later, in the Hellenistic period (323 B.C.-31 B.C.) the word meant, in the context of emperor-worship, ‘to venerate as a god.’

The word *theologia* acquired a new application in view of the swing towards cosmic religion. The deities were no longer the gods of Olympus, but of the cosmos itself — the *meteora*, or astral bodies. Meteorology had now become the sphere of theology.

These ideas persisted up to the patristic period. Augustine (+430) adopted the classic definition: ‘There are three kinds of theology, that is, of the discipline which is concerned with the gods: one of these is the mythic, the second is the physical, and the third is the civil.’ In this definition, the “civil” kind of theology means the theology of public worship, the worship of the emperor as god. The term theology was Christianized very late [in history] because of the reluctance on the part of Christians to use pagan terminology. It was from the fourth century onwards that the Greek Fathers used the word theology.

The word theology was not adopted as readily by the Western church. Abelard (1079-1142) was the first in the West to consistently use the word theology in the Christian theological sense. In the tradition of Abelard, as in the Byzantine theology, the word theology tended to mean a treatise about God himself, rather than the theology of the mystery of Christ.

Aquinas (1225-1274) seldom used the term *theology*, and whenever he did so he used it in a very different sense from the sense in which we should use it now. The study of the human soul, because of its direct relationship with God, was called by Aquinas a theological study, whereas the study of the human body was not [called a theological study]. It is clear that the term theology did not have the full meaning in the scholastic period that it has today. It was in the period between Aquinas and Duns Scotus (1266-1308) that the word theology came to be used as the technical term for what had previously been known as *Sacra Doctrina*. It was especially speculative theology that was influential in bringing about this change from *Sacra Doctrina* to theology. The wide meaning which theology previously had was thrust into the background by a discursive procedure which had been adopted by theology and which had become a 'science of conclusions.' Thus, the classic term theology was placed in the category of speculative theology from the very moment of its birth.

Later, this had unfortunate effects. The *Sacra Doctrina* was divided in the modern period into all kinds of independent disciplines. Moral theology, towards the end of the sixteenth century, apologetic theology in the seventeenth century, and later dogmatic theology, that aimed to define the limits of revealed religion as distinct from all the questions discussed by the scholastics.

In order to establish the concrete structure of theology and its distinctive methodological procedures, it is not possible to proceed from the natural data of what scientific work is, whether these are the data of the Aristotelian scientific concept or those of the modern, positive, phenomenological, and 'humane' sciences. The structure of revelation itself and the act of faith associated with it must suggest the type of reflection to which faith in Christ can lead. Only then shall we be able to throw light on the scientific structure of theology in all its many activities.¹⁵

Schillebeeckx's comments were published in 1967 when the notion of posthumanity had not yet been formally articulated by

¹⁵ *Revelation and Theology* Sheed & Ward 1967:95-102.

philosophers. Beginning in my early adult years I had contemplated conducting an investigation into the scientific structure of theology. I had wondered if there ever would be some universal philosophical agreement or some kind of union of philosophical understanding of the world founded upon a modern scientific approach. It seems to me that for any unity of philosophical agreement to be achieved universally, philosophers would need to surrender their individual and unique powers of self-identity and replace them with some sort of universal philosophical norm, that is, an ideological concept that would re-constitute their self-conception. But I doubt if such a task is achievable.

7. THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION

These days my theological formulation is from within a dehellenized consciousness. A dehellenized consciousness is not a fixed point of view but a point of view that is perpetually undergoing development and reconstruction. The dehellenization process has helped me realize that my Christian and social experience had, for a time, been identical. I had no need to distinguish between them. It was easy, therefore, for me to think that to be a Christian was co-terminus with living in the Western socio-cultural context. It took some time for me to truly appreciate that the Western socio-cultural order is, in fact, the legacy of a Hellenized philosophical tradition. While reading the works of some contemporary Western philosophers, I realized that this Hellenized cultural inheritance was a concern to them. And upon a critical examination of their thinking, I made the discovery that some of them were merely engaged in the up-dating of traditional ideas and not engaged in a process of dehellenization of thought at all. Realizing that, I ceased to follow their lead. I rejected the mere updating of ideas and sought instead an alternative, that is, a truly dehellenized approach in my *philosophical* formulations which eventually lead to changes in my *theological* formulations. Encouraged by the Catholic philosophical language of Vatican II, I favoured a *ressourcement* over an *aggiornamento*. That is, a return to the sources of philosophical thought and language over the mere updating of philosophical language to conform to modern usage. In

light of Vatican II, I asked myself what was to be my approach as a philosopher and theologian, at the end of the Western humanist philosophical age, as I re-construct theological formulations of Christian religious experience. The answer, I realized, was that a return to the sources of Western philosophy would provide a satisfactory orientation in light of a posthuman future.

One effect of distinguishing between *aggiornamento* and *ressourcement* was that I began thinking creatively. Choosing *ressourcement* required a philosophical readjustment on my part. As time went on, I found it necessary to consult historical sources, and reflect about myself in a cultural and social environment that had been evolving and continues to evolve. My cultural and social environment changes on the basis of the collective experiences of my community. Thus, philosophical and theological formulation occurs slowly. Unlike some of my peers, I realized that when answers to my philosophical questions are given beforehand there is no need for me to undertake any theological re-formulation. I can remain passive, uncritically accepting pre-existing ideas. I realized also that I needed to face my own responsibility and become an agent and adjust my thinking accordingly. Thus, my problem became not just how to correct my past, but more significantly, how to plan for my future free from a Hellenized philosophy. Only through a theological formulation not dependent on a Hellenized philosophy could I plan for a future that did not duplicate the past. Through reflecting phenomenologically upon my experience, I have come to understand that Christianity is neither an abstraction, nor an idea. It is not a social ideology. I have abandoned these views and have philosophically re-formulated my Christian belief. The faith community in which I live is a historical reality not only in the secular, psychological, social and natural senses, but also in the religious, physical, spiritual and supernatural senses. I must explain this. To believe in the Judeo-Christian revelation is to believe that in my existence I am affected by the presence of God. That is to say, in my experience of being and becoming, what I have found to be significant is that my original experience might have been otherwise than what it was. The presence of God had not determined it, but only affected it. I admit that I was not aware of the implications of this insight, that original experience could have

been otherwise than what it was, until I was exposed to Leslie Dewart's thinking on the same subject.

By this stage of my philosophical development I had not managed to achieve a satisfactory integration of the Hellenic philosophical concepts into my understanding. I think that part of the reason for my lack of success was due to the fact that the Hellenic concepts were not merely unsatisfactory for interpreting my experience, but also, they were foreign to my experience given the modern context. In other words, my experience was not Hellenic. The fact is that the philosophical and theological questions that are raised within my day-to-day experience have little in common with Hellenic philosophical understanding. I require a contemporary philosophical approach in interpreting my experience. The question is one of re-formulating my Christian philosophical understanding through appropriate alternative concepts.

This is to say that if my theological formulation has any meaning and Christian value for me and my community, it is because I am trying to work out a proper relationship in order to live in responsible creative freedom. To live in responsible creative freedom is the theological purpose I assign to my life. Further, I believe that I am to live in a philosophically contemplative manner, that is, to respond affectively and freely to the vocation which the supernatural presence of God avails me. Thus, I try to respond creatively and faithfully as an individual within a posthuman social order and culture. It seems to me that when the Hellenic philosophers attempted something similar in their time, they presupposed that philosophical ideas were real and possessed an independent existence because cosmic events depended upon Fate, characterized by necessity.

To the contrary, I am a believer, not in Fate but human freedom. Cosmic events do not depend on Fate. When, in freedom, I contemplate what I should do if I were to do the right thing in creating my future, I contemplate, in fact, what I have to do to bring into existence what does not yet exist or is not yet present to my consciousness.

A morally good life and a peaceful world are possible for me to bring about as an agent because I can solve the problems of conduct, or ethics, through conscious creative agency, rather than

passively accepting a theoretical, objective, or ideological norm of conduct. As a creative agent I am able to contemplate philosophical issues before acting on them. Thus, I am truly responsible for my conduct. No one else is. There is no group, or individual, that can do away with my moral creativity. Only I can do that. But, in abdicating my moral creativity I would become dehumanized. My moral decisions arise out of my human creativity. I cannot avoid ruling myself reasonably, humanely, and autonomously. From a moral perspective, I do not do as Plato and Aristotle did, that is, attempt to conform to a preconceived order of reality. In short, through philosophical contemplation I have come to realize that I re-formulate my theological beliefs as an incardinated, individuated and dehellenized living human being. That is why I consider it a philosophical (imaginative) fiction to attribute ethical responsibility to infra-human organisms and non-living things such as robots, or computers assembled with artificial intelligence.

8. THEOLOGY OUTSIDE THE GUILD

Formal scholastic theology began as a professional activity within the universities. Its purpose was to serve the church in clarifying and formalizing doctrine and dogma. To the contrary, I theologize outside any formal ecclesiastical guild that is committed to an institutional, political or polemical agenda. I theologize in an *ecclesial* community of faith with no *ecclesiastical* agenda. The term “ecclesial” connotes a concrete communal relationship among its faithful. The term “ecclesiastical” denotes the hierarchical governing structure of a Christian community. The doctrinal and dogmatic formulations that characterize the traditional Christian denominations have resulted from contentious arguments on theological interpretations of the church throughout its history. As a believing community, the early church needed to settle controversies among various theological points of view circulating at the time. As a consequence, various doctrinal and dogmatic statements have been added to theology over the centuries. These statements, in fact, have hindered creative theological reflection,

and have led to a religious understanding that did not always reflect or agree with the experience of the faithful.

Overtime my consciousness of doctrine and dogma evolved in response to shifts in my *philosophical* thinking. These shifts in philosophical thinking in turn changed my *theological* understanding. The way I now think theologically is through independent critical reflection and outside a theological guild. Critical reflection is a conscious activity of the human mind. It reaches into the depths of the interpretive consciousness of human experience.

By thinking critically, I direct my personal evolution with the intent of evolving as a posthuman human being. Critical reflection allows me to transcend the social, political and religious interpretation that I inherited from the ecclesiastical theological guild. As well, my critical thinking discloses that philosophical and theological systems are not absolutes in themselves, but are methodologies contingent upon the culture in which they arise. My critical reflection on the Western philosophical heritage caused a shift away from the philosophy of a corporate ecclesiastical church and towards the philosophy of a personal and ecclesial community.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) a theologian and philosopher, was among the first to recognize the philosophical shift from ecclesiastical to ecclesial reasoning. He believed that, philosophically speaking, humanity is a self-organizing, pre-theoretical phenomenon whose laws are not simply the laws of social or scientific mechanics. That is to say human beings evolve. That being the case, existential thinkers theorize that pre-theoretical humanity acted according to a spirit which was manifested in religious and ethical movements such as holism and emergent evolution. Through reflecting on holism and emergent evolution outside a theological guild, I eliminated the baggage of the political and power-related controversies of the church that emerged in the Reformation/Counter-Reformation period and which are no longer relevant in contemporary society. By reflecting outside a theological guild, a new *locus* for investigations into religious experience opens up.

The phenomenological attitude of theologians serves to interpret that new *locus* of religious experience. In my theological thinking, however, I cannot ignore the contributions of those other

critical thinkers who have helped in shaping my understanding. Their legacy has been influential in shaping my current thought as a philosopher and theologian. My current critical attitude takes into account the legacy of artists, musicians, novelists, poets and psychologists. I note Marshall McLuhan's insight:

One thing which characterized the finer arts, poetry, painting, music, areas with which we're all familiar, for more than a century, but certainly for the past century, has been a continued insistence on their relevance to daily living. There has been quite an impressive chorus of urgent requests in all fields that we take seriously the arts as basic social factors of enlightenment and guidance and training.¹⁶

I also reflect on the contribution of those theologians whose critical phenomenological thinking addresses the scriptures and accounts for their personal religious experience.

Many contemporary theologians hold to a holistic perspective which accepts that an entity is other than and greater than the sum of its individual parts. That is to say, in holistic thinking, an entity may be assigned meaning beyond its physical or phenomenal limitations. Within the holistic perspective, there are no external boundaries to the understanding of experience since the horizon of human consciousness is unlimited.

With that in mind, my point of departure for writing this book is rooted in the conclusion that Charles Davis (1923-1999) arrived at in *A Question of Conscience*. "I can see well enough that the fundamental intellectual problems for Christians today are the problems of our *knowledge of God in relation to modern philosophy* and the question of the uniqueness of Christ in the confrontation with the other world religions (my italics)."¹⁷ His conclusion reflects Auguste Sabatier's (1839-1901) earlier observation. "Philosophy to-day comprises two parts very different in nature: a study of the thinking subject, or, as it is sometimes called, a critique of reason, or a theory of knowledge; in the second place, a doctrine on the essence and the necessary relations of

¹⁶ *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion* eds. Eric McLuhan and Jacek Szkiarek (Stoddart, 1999:34).

¹⁷ Hodder & Stoughton (1967:240).

beings, a metaphysic, or a theory of the universe.”¹⁸ Both authors provide subject matter for posthuman philosophy.

The process of a phenomenological reflection is a descriptive rather than deductive process. The starting point for a phenomenological reflection is physical human experience. The phenomenological attitude of reflection interprets experience in relational terms. And the purpose of a phenomenological reflection is to evaluate constructively the notional, sociological and psychological perspectives found in human life often outside a guild.

In spite of the emphasis given to the ecumenical dialogue that began in the modern world, Reformation and Counter-Reformation polemics continue to exist. Because of these polemics, many Christians who participate in the life of their respective denominations often feel that they are alienated from the Church of Christ. Recall that in a dehellenized point of view, the Church of Christ subsists, not only in the Catholic Church, but in the other denominations as well. Unlike phenomenological philosophical thinking, scholastic philosophical thinking must present God as transcendent and outside of creation. Phenomenological thinking, however, may disclose an (unknowable) presence of God, as immanent in, yet transcendent to, creation. That is to say, when I think creatively, I am cognizant of an (unknowable) presence of God as immanent in, and yet transcendent to, my life-world. In thinking creatively, I discover that I think and consequently act in co-operation with that which, though unknowable, is “other and greater” than me, yet is present to me.

As a holistic thinker, I am conscious of a greater purpose to my life than being confined to a biological presence in the universe. That greater purpose is to think and love within the hopes, aspirations and anguishes of my age, all outside a theological guild. Should readers choose to think outside a theological guild, I suggest two distinct *loci* for their reflections: one themselves and the other is their community. Understood phenomenologically, individuals and their community are in a reciprocal relationship. However, individual thinkers will conceive various philosophies

¹⁸ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* (1897: 270) George H. Doran.

and theologies to describe these relationships, and these philosophies and theologies, in turn, will affect their construction of community relationships. Plurality, not uniformity, will become the norm. However, diversely conceived theologies often become reduced to stifling dogmatic formulas. As history has shown, such dogmatic formulas, appearing to be universal, have often been mistakenly accepted as normative for both the individual and the Christian community. When such formulas are accepted as normative, Christian communities mistakenly attempt a universal systematization of them that reflects a guild-style scholastic tradition characterized by Thomism. The guild-style philosophical and theological tradition is one of classical incorporation. Such incorporation held together up to the middle of the 20th Century, when the culture-shattering events of the two world wars, a technological revolution, plus the rapid changes in philosophy and psychology coupled with the advancements of the social sciences and the humanities, all brought an end to the dominance of Western medieval Christendom. A novel philosophical consciousness emerged with the end of medieval Christendom and it now shapes a fresh hermeneutic for philosophy and theology in preparation for a posthuman Western world.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, Rationalism was in vogue in England and on the Continent. There were two strains of rational thought that were hostile to religious, and in particular Christian experience. One train of thought was the overt rejection of the whole Christian system, typical in France. The other train of thought, which was typical in Germany, tolerated Christianity but gradually tended to reduce it to a caricature of its former self. However, the existential, rationalistic Germanic thought that later evolved into phenomenological philosophy under the influence of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl resonated with the English theologian George Tyrrell. Although he died before any formal development of a phenomenological school of thought in England, his thinking was definitely heading in that direction.

Philosophers do not think in a void, nor are they restricted to a guild. In fact, their thoughts are products of three interrelated factors: their temperaments, their experiences and, their reading of other philosophers all of which make up their life-world. One of the pioneers of the phenomenological and existential method of

philosophy was Edmund Husserl. He taught that philosophers can reflect on all experience according to a clear methodological framework inasmuch as experience is susceptible to human consciousness. Since all knowledge appears within complex cultural contexts, phenomenological philosophers hold that the world of experience takes precedence over the theoretical world of metaphysics whose advocates often forget its roots are in classical philosophy. Langdon Gilkey has noted that, from a personal perspective, the public task of the theologian is primarily the analysis of life with regard to its religious values and only secondarily as an analysis of life with regard to its economic, sociological or psychological dimensions, although each of these has a religious basis and ground.¹⁹

The style of theological interpretation that I have adopted as being outside a guild is “ordinary theology,” which interprets personal insights arising out of experience. But there is a pitfall in ordinary theology. Theological thinking today is often undertaken as *the study of other people’s ideas*, which is not the same as a self-critical reflection on one’s own personal religious experience. Although modern theology may have begun in the academy, it cannot remain in the academy. Theology given its contemporary purpose, must address the questions, problems, and new data that arise within all aspects of human society, including posthuman society. The thought of any theologian, (and in the final analysis this means anyone trying to understand his or her own ultimate meaning), emerges from the *lebenswelt* (life-world) of the individual. A theologian’s *lebenswelt* is formed through the cultural, social, and religious milieu of life.

Theologians are continually searching for new and meaningful ways to reflect upon religious experience outside the traditional theological guild. In my theological understanding I do not consider the collective intellectual legacy of the past as hardened, dead and irrelevant with respect to the present time any more than I consider the lives of those critical thinkers, whose thoughts have shaped the past, as insignificant to the present time. I suggest that

¹⁹ “The New Being and Christology: The Role of the Theologian in Contemporary Society” in *The Thought of Paul Tillich* eds, J. L. Adams, W. Pauck and R. Shinn (1985) Harper & Row.

the so-called Modernist theologians (Catholic and Protestant) writing at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries are a case in point.²⁰ The past simply needs to be reinterpreted in light of contemporary experience. Although they are dead, the legacy of those critical thinkers continues to shape the present, and possibly will shape the future. In shaping the present their thoughts ought not to be duplicating the past. Their legacy is significant not by virtue of any ecclesiastical theological endorsement, but by virtue of its relevance to our present era and experience.

It is quite clear to my mind, that contemporary philosophical and theological formulation must incorporate aspects of the arts and the human temperament. The experience and understanding of both past and current philosophers and theologians within the Western context are a requisite for posthuman formulations. But these formulations need not be restricted to a guild of any sort.

As history shows, eventually the initial diverse theological understanding of the Church developed into a uniform dogmatic theological system that became normative for the Christian life, particularly in the Western Church. Two early distinct schools of theology, the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools, came into being over Christological controversies. These schools reflected their respective cultural influences. However, they were never homogenous groups. Homogenous schools never existed in a concrete sense. Theologians within these schools managed to embrace convergent themes and approaches, but they never developed a uniform system. These schools revealed that diversity was an integral part of the Church's theological formulation for some time after the deaths of the apostles. As the Church evolved theologians reformulated the Church's self-understanding in different fashions, but not always in conformity to a theological guild.

The distinction within the Church between the Judaic and Hellenistic world-views being overcome, a new formulation of the Christian life was initiated. The imminent return of Jesus was no longer the main focus for living the Christian life. This affected the

²⁰ Cf. Petre, M D (1918) *Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits* T. C. & E. C. Jack [2020 Facsimile Publisher, India].

theological formulation (and governance) of the Church. The influence of Hellenistic ideas continued in the Church for centuries and specialized schools of thought developed long before the Reformation. The Franciscans and Dominicans as specialized schools of thought are cases in point.

In undertaking a critical reflection on the Christian life contemporary theologians and religious philosophers need to somehow “enchurch” their thinking. They need to do this in order to theologically formulate an appropriate understanding of the historically “called” community, i.e., the church. Love for God provides a proper motivation for studying theology. Coming to understand the things of God out of love is the beginning of theology outside a guild and theology at the thresholds of posthumanity.

9. A PERSONAL PROCESS OF FORMULATING POSTHUMAN THEOLOGY

No one in philosophy is ever completely original, obviously, but philosophers are creative thinkers. The idea of philosophical originality is practically a contradiction in terms, if one takes the terms literally, since philosophy already presumes a history. However, a *creative* philosopher engages an existing current of thought and incorporates personal experience with the aid of another philosopher’s creativity. I discuss formulating a creative Christian theology from a personal point of view. In formulating a Christian theology, I engage with the world that I have inherited and the world that I have already created for myself. I am in dialogue with two subjective worlds, as it were. First, the world that I have inherited has been altered by my predecessors’ subjective perspectives. Secondly, I, in turn, interpret subjectively and creatively this inherited world. Leslie Dewart’s efforts at dehellenization are an attempt at heightening philosophical consciousness and they provide an example of encountering two subjective worlds, as it were. Drawing on his insights, I concentrate on the way my belief has been shaped by relational, as opposed to ideological, understanding. Hence, “roles” as opposed to “goals” are the more important in my creative mental activity. In particular, my role as agent. My previous theological formulation

has been based upon Western or Hellenistic ideology. That is to say, my theological formulation had been one that was founded on the copula verb “to be” of Hellenic origin. For, “to be,” means to be some “thing” joined to, or connected with another thing. My investigation into this formulation revealed that a particular dichotomous philosophy had mistakenly become regarded as necessary for theology. This unsatisfactory philosophical view may be corrected. But this is a difficult task for the contemporary thinker to undertake. It requires intellectual effort for two reasons. The first is a long-standing view is that the way that things are is independent of human opinion. Secondly, the mistaken view that we are able to arrive at knowledge about how things are *in themselves* that is objectively reasonable and accurate. In other words, in classical epistemology objective necessity takes precedence over subjective relativity.

A personal process of formulating theology is conditioned by experience. One’s experience may be negative or positive which in turn affects one’s subsequent theological formulations. Reflecting upon personal experience negatively, one may conclude that Western civilization is dying. Things are not the way they used to be. Life is decadent. The Christian moral values that were once acknowledged publicly are challenged within society and often appear as conflicting opinions. Media headlines suggest that world destruction is near given the perpetual state of war and conflict in which humans seem to be engaged. Reflecting on experience positively, however, the world goes on and most ordinary persons are cheerful and optimistic. In the West, the ordinary person believes that life is good and he or she feels a part of a larger rhythm of creation despite any apparent corruption. Ordinary people are conscious of the abundance of the life in which they participate. Often this optimistic attitude is expressed via a religious life, that is, a vowed life, or in secular terms, a respectful attitude toward others and the physical world in general.

Devout people often experience religion as one societal good among others, such as the political and economic movements that have characterized human advancement throughout the ages. However, religious scholarship and the process of theological formulation are not societal goals in themselves. Rather, they are philosophical values. Each is a human intellectual activity. Neither

produces any necessary philosophical system. And neither is a terminal activity in itself, but each only supplies temporary perspectives that are contingent upon the cultural context of the thinker. When I give meaning to my experience, I enter into philosophical formulation. Philosophical formulation is an activity reserved to humans living in society. Brute animals, because they lack a philosophical sense, cannot attribute meaning to their experiences. Members of human societies and institutions consciously and intentionally relate themselves to the events within their common experience. The earlier and simpler stages of anthropological and cultural activity such as tilling, fabricating tools and constructing shelters, along with the rearing of the young, have become established as consciously and intentionally institutionalized human activities. Such stages of transformation, in due time, gave rise to new experiences and subsequent interpretations demanded further re-adjustments within society, or within the institutions of that society. Thus, the human world continues to become more philosophically complicated and this affects the religious consciousness of humanity. In my current philosophical formulation, I would not embrace a metaphysical ideology as the basis for posthuman theology. Theological formulation follows upon philosophical activity which is prior to any ideology.

From a philosophical perspective, the Psalmist has it right, I believe, in asking: “What is man that you should care for him?”²¹ For seasoned philosophers, the inquiry into human nature is prior to the inquiry into divine nature. I have come to realize, as Augustine did, in the need to be conscious of my own human soul, as it were. By being conscious of my own soul, I recognize that many present-day philosophical problems are simply the outcome of a recent crisis of Western human knowledge, i.e., theological Modernism. Thus, in the process of a posthuman theological formulation I do not ignore the existential issues arising from the Modernist Crisis.

All cultural institutions are a means through which individuals relate to each other. Family, government, church, agriculture, trade, etc. are examples. The decay or the growth of any one of

²¹ Psalm 8:4.

them will have a corresponding influence on individuals (as agents) in their particular social institutions. Creative theological formulation cannot take place in a self-defensive and self-isolating context of decay. Rather, creative theological formulation needs a constructive and supportive context for growth. This supportive and constructive context for growth is faith. This book is not a devotional or pious work, nor is it a professional academic work. It is intended as an address to the educated and philosophically interested reader as well as the seasoned and possibly disaffected religious thinker in the context of faith. In short, it is an attempt to satisfy the religious human intellect in contemplating philosophical and theological notions where traditional understanding seems to have failed.

Theological formulation ought to be based on one's contemporary "style of life," not upon an inherited ideology, or supernatural schema of philosophical metaphysics. Theological formulation is proper to human beings, who cannot help but realize themselves as being Christian or, at least, religiously non-Christian. Philosophical and theological formulation in the West is based on the thinking animal as distinguished from the brute animal. Thus, posthuman Christian self-discovery will disclose its own special character with respect to consciousness human intellectual activity. Christian self-discovery engages emotion, feeling and intuition, which enable one to encounter that which is transcendent given that human consciousness extends beyond sensible experience. A further purpose of this book is to avoid repeating the distortions of past ideologies (hellenization) and of avoiding present fantasies, and succumbing to uncritical "new age" thought.

Posthuman theological formulation presumes that a relationship between God and the believer has actually been established which opens up opportunities for a unique personal self-discovery characteristic of religious insight. Theological formulation, based on critical self-discovery is appropriate to posthuman needs when: 1) self-discovery is related to actual experience, 2) self-discovery is realized within social relationships, 3) self-discovery serves the further function of personal and collective spiritual growth.

§

POSTHUMANITY

10. A POSTHUMAN PHILOSOPHICAL BLUEPRINT

A characteristic of our time is the absence of a dominant world vision guiding the peoples of the earth. Even our Western perspective is without a philosophical life-scheme to which the entire culture subscribes. All current philosophic blueprints for humanity and its environment are likely to be minority opinions. There is, however, an openness of mind in most philosophers to consider the theories of all the groups which make up humanity. It is not surprising, then, that many religious philosophers are curious to find out just how Catholic philosophers consider life and society. Catholic philosophers remain in a time of crisis. Much which we currently know will pass and new knowledge will come. In light of this development posthuman philosophy must retain the solid values and philosophical goods that humanity has previously gained in order to achieve an authentic human transition.

My observation of evolution is that organic life is evolving (moving) towards diversity, not towards uniformity. I understand that to exist is the activity of a concrete organic being and such consciousness is a pre-requisite to any sort of “higher” notion of life that may be conceived. Any “higher” notion of life is a metaphysical notion of life, but not necessarily in a Hellenistic sense. Some philosophers hold metaphysical notions to have a “substantive” quality, that is, there is objective content to metaphysical ideas. Of course, this cannot be accurate since metaphysical realities cannot be measured. Considering physical reality, nothing can be “more real” to me than myself. My *self* is the test and the measure of my physical reality. As I identify myself existentially, I assume that there are other organic beings similar to me in some manner, yet who are separate from me and act differently than me. Further, be they infrahuman or human,

they likely are sentient and conscious like me.²² That being the case I am able to construct a world of relationships and social affections by relating myself to them.

Unless I consciously create a blueprint for my life, I am not intelligible to myself or to others as a self-determining agent. To be a self-determining agent I must consciously construct my social identity. In constructing my social identity, intelligibility is proper to my consciousness. But human consciousness is not proper to all living organisms as some “New Age” philosophers are wont to have it. It is through consciously willing and acting that I differentiate myself within my social milieu. My milieu is within the philosophical flow of linear time in which the past is behind me, the present is around me, and the future before me. This observation is susceptible of all beings, animate or inanimate, since their existence is subject to time and deterioration. Quantum physics, however, continues to disclose new and alternative insights into human consciousness and the flow of time. In this regard, Carlo Rovelli offers such insight and understanding in his *Reality is not What it Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*.²³

My life-world, as constituted through my consciousness, is in constant motion and demands new responses to my unique existential situation. Furthermore, my life-world is a unity of *relationships*, not a union of *ideas* conceived within a Hellenistic perspective. My unique self-differentiation emerges from within the mysterious reality beyond being, i.e., life. Through the process of individuation, my self-differentiated identity (my philosophical blueprint) results in my presence to others. Instead of waiting to be moved, that is, being acted upon, I seek to move myself (to act) in light of my memories, reflections and present experiences. In this movement (activity) I assign meaning to all objects and occurrences which appear to my phenomenological consciousness. In this process of assigning meaning I also construct my personality as I differentiate myself within a social environment. My social environment is known by me (that is, given meaning by me) in light of my consciousness which distinguishes me from

²² I acknowledge that the manner of infrahuman and human consciousness differs, but shares certain functions in common.

²³ Penguin Books 2017.

others identified as “not me.” I mean this distinction in the sense of William James’ understanding, as quoted by Ralph Winn:

One great splitting of the whole universe into two halves is made by each of us, and for each of us almost all of the interest attaches to one of the halves; but we all draw the line of division between them in a different place. When I say that we all call the two halves by the same names, and that those names are ‘me’ and ‘not-me’ respectively, it will at once be seen what I mean.²⁴

I presume that James does not mean “halves” in the mathematical sense of parts that are equal, but merely as two unequal parts that constitute a whole.

A healthy individuality (I do not mean individualism) results from the differentiation between “me” and “not-me.” A healthy individuality engages the art of living to overcome the chaos of experience. I require a sense of harmony and coherence within myself since I cannot tolerate the confusion of experience “as is” without an explanation (scientific) or personal interpretation (philosophic) of why or how it came to be so. Further, these explanations and interpretations must be such that they accurately conform to my experience. They cannot be imaginative fantasies. In other words, they must confirm that my experience is true. It is through an experience of harmony and unity within myself that I become consciousness that there must be a different kind of reality beyond being that grounds my own existence (i.e., my being). Thus, in my posthuman blueprint, I distinguish a difference between a concrete reality (physical reality) as being, and non-concrete reality (metaphysical reality) as beyond being.

This kind of reality (the metaphysical type) beyond being cannot be measured by any system of measurement. Auguste Sabatier had a similar insight when he wrote: “The intelligible is no doubt real; but it is not certain that all the real is intelligible. Reality appears to us now as surpassing not only our knowledge, but our means of knowing.”²⁵ Being conscious means that I can

²⁴ Cf. Runes, Dagobert *Dictionary of Philosophy: Ancient, Medieval, Modern* 1963 Littlefield Adams (s.v. “Self”).

²⁵ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* (1897:283) George H. Doran.

act intelligibly within metaphysical reality, i.e., life. Whereas some organisms cannot. There is one, and only one activity that is known to me without doubt. That is the activity of being conscious of my own life. I infer that every action, not caused by me, is caused by a “not-me.” Further, when transcendent, that “not-me” cause is beyond being, yet does not interfere with the laws of physics, psychology or any of the sciences. From a philosophical perspective, that transcendent “not-me,” inferred from experience is natural to human consciousness and harmonizes with life.

I must form some philosophical hypothesis (a blueprint) to interpret the riddle of my presence in the cosmos of which I constitute a part, since the answer to this riddle is not self-evident. I infer from experience the hypothesis that I am to act as “co-creator” in the cosmos, to overcome its chaos. In the activity of co-creation, my freedom is expanded and strengthened, and creation is under my jurisdiction in the sense of manageability, not in the sense of creation *ex nihilo*. (This is at the core of my present posthuman understanding.) However, I cannot definitively define my co-creative activity any more than I can definitively define my co-creator, i.e., God. Ultimately, my co-creative activity is as much a mystery as is God’s agency.

As a philosopher, engaged in co-creating my life-world I contemplate three fundamental qualities of the human organism. I understand these qualities to be consciously and progressively developed. They are philosophical, yet are often seen as religious (or theological) in the Western tradition of thought. They are:

- The quality of physical substance in a living organism (a concrete value).
- The transcendental (abstract) quality of virtue as conceptual.
- The mysterious (affectively true) quality of faith.

These values constitute no distinct separation within persons manifesting these qualities. As I acknowledged above, evolution shows that diversity, not unity, is the outcome of human advancement. Thus, my posthuman blueprint suggests the reversal of what I was taught. That a unification (reunion) of my fragmented life is *necessary* to attain complete and true knowledge. In fact, this is not the case. Conscious of this reversal, I am no longer consider myself a Hellenist philosopher. I am more a

posthuman philosopher of inner wisdom than a philosopher of the academy; I am more interested being consciousness of reality than in a metaphysical system of being; I am more interested in living than in a theory of life. All this to say that I am a philosopher whose interest is constructing a blueprint of the posthuman person.

11. POSTHUMAN PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Phenomenological posthuman consciousness discloses a presence of God through the believer's practical, or ethical behaviour in life. I realize that not all scholars accept that the phenomenological approach authenticates or clarifies experience. To some scholars the phenomenological approach obscures more than clarifies. In my philosophical contemplation, I have come to realize that there is a relational unity composed of me as the contemplating subject, and "the other," as either the object (physical or metaphysical) of my contemplation or, as another contemplating subject. That is to say that I used to think about God (Life), while being *outside* God (Life), rather than thinking about God (Life) while being *within* God (Life). That being the case, I now interpret my experience as being a world of relationships within the presence of God.

In a world of relationships something more than physical change occurs in my experience. A change in my consciousness takes place. Within posthuman phenomenological consciousness there is a re-structuring in the relationship between me and the other, the "not-me." That is so since I am now conscious of the other from a different perspective. That is, I understand the other, not as a Platonic ideal, but as a product of my intentions. That is, I intentionally assign meaning to others inhabiting my life-world. My subjective assignment is an active process of conscious differentiation that defines what it means for me to be "me," and for the "other" to be "other."

I have often noticed that when old gods die people do not generally turn to atheism. They invent new gods, even secular

ones.²⁶ Yet, their inventions do not always prove satisfactory. What may prove satisfactory, however, in place of the invention of new gods, is a religious posthuman phenomenological approach that re-interprets the old gods, as it were. The old gods require a re-interpretation, not of themselves, but require interpretation that leads to new creative insights and relationships on the part of the interpreter. In short, old patterns of religious thought arising out of humanism must be re-formulated to meet the challenge of posthuman experience. Thus, the classical humanist context must be adequately comprehended before a posthuman context can be adequately understood. John Kersey makes a similar point in the context of non-traditional education.

Teaching online means that, in an economic, time-efficient and resource-efficient manner, the benefits of the tutorial system can be realized. The skills needed of faculty are now more than merely operating software and marketing work; there is need to comprehend the needs of the environment of distance learning and to respond to it with understanding. It is here that the experience of faculty who have themselves studied via distance learning and who are aware of its challenges is valuable.²⁷

During the time of the theologian George Tyrrell (1861-1909) a novel theological trend began. This new trend was due to a scientific religious philosophy satisfying the existential needs of the individual believer. Thus, professional theologians no longer served only the doctrinal and dogmatic needs of the Church. This novel trend differed from the approach espoused by the ecclesiastical corporation. However, this trend proved to be only minimally successful. Its limited success was due to the failure to assign philosophy an appropriate role within the Western Church to interpret this new scientific trend. Rather, the magisterium continued to adhere to a classical and nostalgic perspective in

²⁶ Auguste Sabatier (1897:26) says the same: "Religious beliefs do not die; they are simply transformed." *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* George H. Doran.

²⁷ Kersey, John (2009:200) *The University Outside State Control: Writings on Independent Universities, Non-traditional Education and Related Matters* European-American University Press.

teaching. In 1968, Roderick Mackenzie, in an address to the Theological Congress in honour of Canada's centenary, wrote:

At times, biologists, paleontologists, sociologists, psychologists, may have contributions to make of very great importance to the magisterium: if not directly, as expounding truths of faith, still indirectly, as warning of the existence of new problems, which may oblige to a re-examination of traditional teachings, or of traditional ways of expressing them.”²⁸

Some academics might counter my point by citing the apparent renewal of classical philosophical thought taking place within certain Western universities today — Catholic universities in particular. However, in an ecclesial context it appears to me that no significant advancement towards posthuman thinking has been achieved as yet. But the seed has been planted. The present perspective reflected in the *Decree on the Training of Priests*, identifies the place of classical philosophy in the Church's magisterial tradition. “Philosophical subjects should be taught in such a way that students are first of all gradually led to a solid and coherent knowledge of human nature, the world and God, guided by *the philosophical tradition of lasting value*.”²⁹ “The philosophical tradition of lasting value” is classical philosophy exemplified in scholasticism and, in my opinion, is about to be recognized as a forerunner of posthuman philosophy. In a posthuman context there is need to establish a philosophy that will be suitable for addressing the meaning of life for “humanity-as-a-subject” *within* creation, and not “humanity-as-an-object” *of* creation. That is to say, humanity is not merely the product of a creative evolution, but humanity as an agent, co-creates itself within the cosmos. In the present religious climate of the West, I detect a renewed interest in the human individual as a person in the disciplines of philosophy, theology and psychology. Thus, the classical idea of the person needs to be re-examined within a

²⁸ Renewal of the Doctrine of Man (1968:110) in *Renewal of Religious Structures, Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada 1867-1967* Vol.2 Palm Publishers.

²⁹ *The Basic Sixteen Documents of Vatican Council II* Costello Publishing (1996:375) My italics.

posthuman phenomenological perspective, which views these three disciplines not so much as academic disciplines in their own right, but as legitimate *loci* for re-examining the notion of the person *within* these disciplines. In short, what it means to be a posthuman person will be determined by philosophers, theologians and psychologists each in accord with the norms of the discipline. Thus, the seeking of a human status is not bound by any particular intellectual heritage.

As previously noted, history shows that the expanding of philosophical consciousness in theistic philosophy has been the work, not of ecclesiastical theologians, but of faithful individuals whose role was sometimes in opposition to the ecclesiastical magisterium. These individuals often intended to correct or modify the formal teaching of the Church. The foundation of humanism, based on a pre-modern classical anthropology, is questioned by posthuman philosophers. What the most appropriate response should be to this questioning presents itself as a significant theological question for our time. Since speaking of God really means that I am at the same time saying something meaningful about myself, then thinking about God in the philosophical categories that belong to an earlier age of human experience are simply not capable of the job. The secular preference in posthuman thinking notwithstanding, I continue to identify the Church as the preferred *locus* of my contemplation of God. As a matter of philosophical conviction, I do accept that there are limits to Catholicism as an ideology, but not to Catholicity as a quality of life. In my estimation, Catholicism is limited by scholastic idealistic philosophy, whereas Catholicity is free from such scholastic constraints. Catholicity's only limitation is human consciousness.

Humanity searches for a better world but often without seeking a better philosophical explanation of its experience of that which is divine in the world than the explanation it has inherited. I recognize that a dynamic concept of nature is replacing the static concept of nature among the *sensus fidelium*. This dynamic and evolutionary concept of nature presents new problems for philosophy, theology and psychology which call for a new analysis and interpretation of experience. That being the case, to my mind, the solutions arrived at through classical philosophy must be

replaced by solutions arrived at through existential philosophy. Through the study of history, I arrived at my present philosophical understanding. Recognizing that my thinking had evolved was a significant discovery in that I had replaced the *idea* of “being” with the *notion* of “coming-into-being.” I understand “coming-into-being” as the emergence of something which is not ultimately reducible to its antecedents. Henri Bergson’s (1859-1941) insights in *Creative Evolution* come to mind here.³⁰ That is to say that the human mind (not brain) as it continually emerges from the complexity of matter, modifies and develops itself. Through my mind, then, I modify and develop my philosophical, theological and psychological perspectives.

Within Western culture there is a sense that human beings are destined for a higher life. The notion of a higher life, or higher purpose in life, originates in the experiences of this world, not from any source outside of this world. Philosophically, this higher purpose originating in experience has as an influence on theological interpretation. As an existential theologian, I can never complete the interpretation of my experience as long as I live. I perpetually embrace a philosophy that will support my expanding consciousness of God’s presence within the *ecclesia* and within my world. Acquiring philosophical knowledge through formal human reasoning is a natural activity not to be confused with obtaining supernatural knowledge through a gift of faith. These human activities are not identical, but related activities. No particular philosophy is required to express the faith. Although, with the papal encyclical *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII (1950), such a requirement was the case. Today, many philosophers and theologians see the comment of Pope John Paul II (+2005): “Certainly the Church’s Magisterium does not intend to impose upon the faithful any particular theological system, still less a philosophical one,” as an advancement in magisterial understanding.³¹ Certainly, all philosophy is culturally contextualized, yet a posthuman phenomenological philosophy does not conform to any given fixed methodology. Phenomenological interpretation is a non-analytic interpretation

³⁰ 1944 Modern Library.

³¹ *Veritatus Splendor* 1993 para 29.

applicable to any human experience. *Shadows in the Cave: A Phenomenological Approach to Literary Criticism Based on Hispanic Texts*, by Mario Valdés is an example of non-analytical textual interpretation.³²

Reflecting on the existential situation in which I find myself, I readily recognize, as a critical thinker, that Christianity has no cosmology of its own. Yet, pagan religious traditions, unlike the Christian traditions, do have their sacred cosmological mythologies and legends which reflect a particular consciousness of their religious experience. Further, paganism has no fixed creed of belief. Nor does paganism record superheroes similar to Christian martyrs or saints who surrender their lives for a moral commitment. A revealed sense of the holy, as a prior condition for faith, is requisite in the monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This monistic sense of the holy is not found in pagan religious traditions. For them the holy or scared tends to be intrinsic and dispersed within the world.

The experience of an increasing number of Western theologians is that Christian theology suffers from a reliance on an outdated theoretical epistemology in interpreting the faith. They believe theology ought to undertake a new philosophical approach and subscribe to a posthuman philosophy of “being-becoming” as opposed to a philosophy of “being” as “being.” Phenomenology is a “being-becoming” philosophy. Phenomenological philosophy does not re-present transcendent things but discloses a “present presence” of transcendent things. In the phenomenological disclosure (or realization) of such a transcendent presence, by which I mean God, I recognize an encounter with that “not-me” which does not limit me. I deliberately cultivate this consciousness. In interpreting my experience phenomenologically, I assign meaning to the relationships between myself and others. But these are not relations of a classical sort, but rather are relations of the phenomenological posthuman sort that have religious significance.

Without knowing the cause, my mind has developed *powers* of consciousness and purpose. Thinking consciously and purposefully has led me to an awareness that God alone is not responsible for

³² 1982 University of Toronto Press.

everything any more. I have a responsible role in constructing my life-world. This role requires that I conceive myself as a co-responsible participant and co-creator agent within my culture and society. Given this status I am able to effectively work towards building the kingdom of God on earth which satisfactorily discloses the presence of God. Thus, I can determine as a believer, philosopher and theologian, in what sense and with what consequences God is present to me. I must first clarify my philosophy and subsequently my theology and in that order. In the development of my Christian theism, God's presence to me is a matter of experiential fact, not of metaphysical necessity. In short, God's presence to me is not the "fated" presence of necessity, but the revealed presence of unnecessary love, originating *a parte Dei*.

By being consciousness, I identify myself uniquely to myself and to others. Consciousness is the means through which my identity is constituted philosophically. Thus, for me to be a subject, that is, an identifiable person, is also to be a particular object to others, as well as, to myself. I do not understand my identity as fixed and determined by an external other, a "not-me." My identity is determined by my relationships at any given stage of development of my conscious life. By interpreting my experience through a phenomenological philosophy, I formulate my personal identity. As a person facing an indeterminate future I desire to participate consciously in my evolution beyond my present status. Thus, as a Christian, if I look at the world and interpret my personality through Hellenic eyes, I am obliged to look to the past and not beyond my present identity. (In other words, I would be looking at life through a rear-view mirror.) Looking to the past as a Hellenist, I am required to accept the power of God over me. Remaining focused on the past, I am a creature with no opportunity to evolve to a co-creator status. However, through a posthuman dehellenized understanding, the God beyond me, in whose presence I am, does not have absolute power over me in any classical sense. I experience that God's power is shared with me as co-creator — having been made in God's image and likeness. The fundamental relation between God and me consists, not in a hierarchical relationship of power, but in a mutual relationship of God and me in a conscious relational unity wherein I participate in divine creativity. As I dehellenize my Christian theism my faith is

reformulated in terms that do not imply God's absolute power over me, nor imply my inordinate submission to God.

From a philosophical perspective, beginning in late Modernity rapid technological advances have limited the ecclesiastical influence upon the faithful in the western secular culture. The Internet is a case in point. With the advent of the Internet a new ideology (virtual reality, that is, an "almost" reality) along with the new technology continues to be developed through the advance of scientific knowledge. At this point in its history the notion of a virtual community may seem to suggest that the real community is threatened. The Internet appears to be a forum of dis-integration of tradition. In this disintegration a partially mediated contact by constituents is acceptable and sufficient. In the internet Virtual Community there is no possibility of real incarnations (integrated personalities) contacting other real incarnations to construct physical human relationships as in the world of concrete experience. The Virtual Community provides a simulated computerized version of existence, that presents many philosophical and theological challenges to understanding humanity as incarnated organisms bounded by time. To my mind, any non-incarnated, digital relationship, misconceived as authentic existence, does not reflect a true human community or society since the simulation engineered by the virtual decision-maker is not that of actual beings, but of "avatars." These avatars are the imagined result of the inordinate and uncritical use of Internet technology that engenders, as it were, impotent, non-humanized, and un-incarnated metaphysical entities. Avatars intentionally represent the "absence" of a physical human being.

Yet, in the contemporary experience with technology, the Internet (an interactive posthuman medium) has been known to stimulate the human mind's activity and to develop the mind's capacity for knowledge. Whereas, a television-style technology (a passive human medium) has been known to dull the mind's activity. In short, I experience that the Internet can turn my mind "on" and that television can turn my mind "off." Both have, and continue to have, their effect on the development of my current theism.

I had been taught throughout my academic formation that humanism provided a reliable approach when contemplating

Christian belief. With that understanding, classical science had been suggested to me as a proper approach to answer my questions — classical science being but a different type of philosophy.³³ Somewhat of late, however, I have re-focused my attention and abandoned pursuing classical science in relation to theistic belief. Nor have I accepted modern science in its place. To my mind, attempts at seeking to prove, through modern science, that God exists are futile. In my experience, such attempts by modern science tell me nothing of God. As I currently see it, the contemporary task of the theologian is not to look for an opportunity to overcome the opposition between religion and science and thus overcome an apparent “death of theology.” As Auguste Sabatier (1839-1901) noted: “The opposition established by scholasticism between faith and science, is it not as irreligious as it is irrational, and has it not been one of the chief causes of the death of theology in the Church and of the triumph of incredulity in the present age?”³⁴ Rather, the theologian’s task is to undertake to express clearly the experience of faith, in light of scripture and tradition, with the aid of the philosopher.

Initially, I found myself born into an existential situation that I did not make or design but had inherited. I know that I cannot stop its continual evolution. I also know that I am personally involved in its transformation, and the question has become to what degree will I influence that evolution. As a Western Christian, I live within that anxiety and tension which accompany the end of classical humanism. But within this tension I am conscious of a new beginning leading to a new future. This consciousness marks the beginning of the philosophical dehellenization of my thinking. As a dehellenized thinker, I am not restricted to any necessary philosophical system of my own making, but I am free to explore that of a community of like-minded philosophers.

³³ Karl Pearson (1857-1936) the acknowledged founder of statistics, thought that (classical) science was a different sort of philosophy as Leslie Dewart notes in his PhD thesis on Pearson.

³⁴ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* (1897:81) George H. Doran.

Looking optimistically to the future, a phenomenological theology presents a posthuman perspective that may bring about an end to the antithesis between Rome and the Reformation. Thus, a future posthuman outcome may be neither Roman nor Reformed. I find this an exciting philosophical and theological possibility within Catholicity free from ecclesiastical regulation.

12. A PROCESS OF POSTHUMAN THEOLOGIZING

My personal theology does not consist in an uncritical acceptance of doctrinal or dogmatic ideas. My personal theology is a reflective presentation of my thinking as affected by the reading and digesting of texts of other theological philosophers. Initially, my critical reflections seemed new to me but I soon discovered that others had similar reflections within their contexts. Two historical examples being William Gladstone (1809-1898) and George Tyrrell (1861-1909). And even though I am writing in 2020, William Gladstone, George Tyrrell and I share a similar cultural history. During my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto, Leslie Dewart had introduced me to the theme of dehellenization in philosophical and theological thinking. When I encountered the writings of William Gladstone and George Tyrrell, I discovered that in their day they had embarked on this critical theme which had not yet acquired the identifier “dehellenization.” They were, to my mind, on a threshold of a posthuman approach to philosophy and theology.

Contemporary theologians, whether they are Jewish, Christian or Muslim have a personal responsibility to their respective communities. My theological thinking is carried on within, not without, my faith community, but not within any particular guild of the community. Human communities mediate the experience of believers as they pass on to future generations the fruits of their theological reflections. In order for future posthuman theologians to be credible, critical reflective thinking is a requirement. Therefore, I undertake critical thinking in an existential philosophy, which is a dehellenized philosophy. In addition to any interfaith theological dialogue on revelation among Jews,

Christians and Muslims, there is the further issue of critical reflective collaboration among all theological philosophers including those of non-monotheistic religions. Critical reflective collaboration is a clear, consistent, professional and systematic sharing of insights into the personal, but not private, experience of God's presence. The sharing of such insights among philosophers and theologians creates existential (dehellenized) philosophical and theological thresholds appropriate to a posthuman context.

Philosophy, among all the disciplines available to assist me in this task of constructing posthuman theology, is the most fundamental one and is to be preferred to other disciplines, such as sociology or psychology. This is so since philosophy is a properly subjective task of evaluating religious experience, whereas psychology and sociology are proper objective methodologies for describing religious experience. The more recent disciplines of psychology and sociology being "soft" sciences share modern scientific roots and their advent has brought a clinical (analytic) significance to the discipline of science. This is not the case for philosophy, which is not a scientific discipline.

To my mind, within an existential theological understanding, what is said of Christian theology may be said, *inter alia*, of Jewish and Islamic theology. Existential theology transcends cultural expression and denominational religious differences. That is to say, existential theology is not reserved to those theologians thinking within the organized and visible churches, synagogues or mosques. Further, Christian existential theologians recognize that not all members of the visible church belong to the invisible church and vice versa. Christian existential theology, by transcending denominational and official corporate interests, is less likely to become enslaved to an institutional and political ideology. Theology, free from denominational and corporate interests, requires the abandonment of the classical model of traditional theology which tends to advance doctrine and dogma polemically. To my mind, should theological thinking fail at transcending institutional interests and become a polemical servant of the visible ecclesiastical community, and not serve the believer, that failure is tantamount to a spiritual death for both the community and believer.

Existential Theology must be distinguished from Religious Studies, which is a separate discipline in its own right. As a distinct academic discipline Religious Studies has roots in the Western academic thinking characteristic of the mid to late 19th Century. In its pedigree are listed philology, linguistics, historiography, anthropology, ethnology, archaeology, and sociology. In the posthuman academic context Religious Studies will need to describe religious beliefs in cultural terms different than previous ones. Theology, however, in the philosophical context of posthumanity, will seek knowledge not from an ideological and dogmatic perspective but from the phenomenological perspective of human consciousness.

Interestingly, despite the evolution from interpreting theology via classical epistemology to interpreting it through human consciousness, for most professionals it is still perceived to be a service limited to persons preparing to minister in a particular religious community or corporate faith tradition. From my philosophical perspective, however, I recognize a major role for theology in rendering a *ministerium verbi divini*, that is, a service to the Word of God. A *ministerium verbi divini* in the full sense of word and sacrament, is beyond service to a mere institutional community.

Theology is nothing less than an interpretation of personal religious experience of the presence of God, primarily individually, and secondarily collectively. As a reflection on religious experience, theology is not a theoretical discipline. If it were a theoretical discipline, theology would be reserved to a reflection on a dogmatic and doctrinal catechism. Reserving one's inquiry to the catechism, or ideological doctrine or dogma, is more properly the domain of religious studies than theology. To my mind, there are certain *existentialia*, or existential experiences that constitute my life-world. They are fear, despair, love, hope, suffering, death, happiness, and guilt. Yet, these *existentialia* reflect only one part of my existence, the human part (*a partis hominis*). They are not of God (*a parte Dei*) which also constitutes my life-world. Thus, questions arise concerning each part, God's and mine, in light of scriptural understanding.

Scripture, not a confessional norm, is the primary and necessary *datum* for an existential Christian theology. This is not

to deny that a confessional corporate ideology imports important theological data into my experience via church teaching. But such imports are secondary. By way of example, philosophical attempts seeking to prove the truth of Revelation are futile and tell me nothing. My task as an existential theologian is not look for a philosophical proof for the truth of Revelation. Rather, my task is to clarify and philosophically express the experience of faith, *vis á vis* scripture and tradition in a posthuman context.

In contemporary Western culture the Christian life may be legally private but it is ethically and morally public. Christian theology is ethically and morally permissible within the public forum. The influence of Christian theology upon politics, in a general fashion, brings about social transformation resulting in new social constructions. These social constructions arise from the personal relationship between the private individual and the public community which is nothing less than a response to an ecclesial life embedded in the larger public community.

After Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church deliberately attempted to enter a dialogue with other faith communities about religious meaning in the public forum. The theologians of Vatican II recognized that the Church is to serve humanity in its secular life as well as in its spiritual life. Although this is not necessarily evident to all. Today, Catholic philosophers and theologians are conversing, intellectually and spiritually, with many other religious philosophers and theologians, both Christian and non-Christian. From the late 19th Century onwards the Catholic Church left, to some degree, its classical corporate self-understanding, and took on a conscious personal self-understanding. To my mind, this change in perspective was significantly promoted by Modernist thinking within Roman Catholicism. Such promotion has led to further thresholds for posthuman philosophy. In understanding itself within a posthuman perspective, the Roman Church will most likely abandon the idea that a single cultural norm, originating in ancient Rome, can continue to determine its self-understanding. By way of example, in the contemporary North American context, the corporate Church seeks to dialogue with partners holding common beliefs wherever they may be found. Tolerance is a significant virtue in the North American civic tradition. However, in addition to its positive effect, tolerating too much variation may have a

negative effect. Too much variation in the public discourse tends to impede personal discourse. It appears to me that an effective dialogue in the public forum is likely unachievable due to an exaggeration of tolerance to an almost “anything goes” attitude in accepting private beliefs. Too much variation in public belief makes dialogue among partners extremely difficult.

Westernized culture lacks an accepted theological language concerning meaning, value and experience. Thus, Westernized culture can only engage in a minimally successful discourse in the public forum. As a result, I, as an individual, am not as influential in the public forum as I may have been in more uniform cultural context. My experience is that Christendom (my previous ecclesiastical context) is dead or at least dying. Even though I have been born into an ecumenically religious age that has been well established and can easily be distinguished from a secular age, I still experience the lack of a satisfactory ecumenically public language. This lack of a satisfactory ecumenically public language makes discussions with non-Catholic theologians difficult. To add to this difficulty, when science, which sets the standard for contemporary secular discussion, attempts answers to my deeper questions of existential meaning they are not adequately addressed. But this occurs rarely. My deeper existential questions need to be answered by philosophers and theologians and not by scientists.

The Western intellectual tradition, from the scholastics onwards, acknowledges the notion of an individual and collective *humanum*.³⁵ Many contemporary philosophers hold that the *humanum* is that which actively constitutes humanity. In the West it has been traditionally the goal of government to enhance this *humanum*, through favouring a humanitarian construction of a dual civic secular and religious society. In the recent past this active *humanum* has been challenged in the West by the concept of a sovereign individualism taking preference over the notion of a dependent individuality with a collective *humanum*. However, in Christian existential theology, the notion of individual sovereignty

³⁵ I do not mean *humanum* as understood in the German philosophical tradition as “relevant invariant.” Rather, I follow the perspective of Markus Gabriel and understand *humanum* as a dynamic reality capable of conceiving itself in a variety of ways. [Cf. *I Am Not a Brain* (2017:3) Polity Press.]

is not an absolute goal. Rather, an individual must be subordinated to a greater “other” in some manner. *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* of the Second Vatican Council taught that there is inherent value and meaning in the lives of individuals in this world, but not absolutely so. *Gaudium et Spes* also notes that Christian humanitarianism is founded on the human dignity that is ultimately grounded in God’s presence to the Christian community, not to select individuals. The *imitatio Christi*, then, as a particular way of life, is an embodiment of one’s individual role and one’s collective role in the community. It is this combined personal and collective role that will most suitably express the *humanum* within a postmodern Christian community.

As a posthuman philosopher, I have two tasks of equal obligation. One is to interpret the corporate tradition of the faith to which I belong and the other is to interpret my personal experience of the faith within that corporate tradition. In undertaking these tasks, I have noted that the theological language influenced by the Enlightenment has ceased to be solely theoretical and rational. It has evolved pragmatically. Also, I have noted that theological language no longer excludes ideas from the human and “soft” social sciences, but now includes them. However, theological language has become somewhat clinical from encountering these social sciences. In a posthuman Western context objective holiness and sacredness will likely not be perceived to be that important in the public forum. Subjective consciousness will be perceived to be more important. Thus, it is to be expected that posthuman theologizing will emphasize the development of a more comprehensive personal consciousness, at least in my view.

13. A POSTHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

In this section, I explore more deeply that posthuman consciousness may serve as a means of assigning meaning to experience. Human consciousness presents me with a new understanding of 21st Century reality. The notion of philosophical dehellenization as understood by Leslie Dewart (and introduced by him throughout all his books) characterizes an aspect of posthuman consciousness which has developed beyond the philosophy of

classical humanism. In its broadest sense the philosophical term, “humanism,” as I understand it, is that view of life in which the welfare and happiness of persons, individually and collectively, are primary. This understanding has evolved over the years within the Western philosophical schools. At one particular time, Renaissance humanism, in contrast to secular humanism, was integrated into religious knowledge. With the aid classical learning, Renaissance humanism encouraged the celebration of human life to the maximum. However, in the 20th Century, a new form of humanism developed which rejected all forms of the supernatural as religious, relying on reason, science and political democracy to better humanity’s condition.

Beginning in the 21st Century another perspective has begun to appear in posthuman philosophical thought. A heightened human consciousness is gaining recognition among philosophers as a means of deconstructing the classical idea of humanism. The prefix “post,” in posthumanity, suggests a view as “following upon” humanism, but not in any sequential order where the posthuman necessarily supplants the human order by nullifying it. Posthumanity did not have to appear in the philosophical evolutionary process. It has not been “fated” to appear, but rather was created by Western philosophers given their new heightened consciousness. Posthumanity is characterized by self-conscious self-discovery of a new notion of consciousness that coexists alongside, but independently of, classical epistemology. A posthuman philosophy challenges the meaning of globalization, technoscience, capitalism and climate change that deliberately blurs any demarcation of these topics and encourages fluidity of fiction and fact, imagination and reality. Within such blurring, I focus on posthuman philosophical reasoning that attempts to assign meaning to the human consciousness of God. Although I undertake this task within Western Christianity, I suggest that my philosophical remarks, with proper adjustments, are applicable to any cultural understanding of the consciousness of God, or the gods.

Posthuman consciousness functions as an exegesis interpreting the human context addressing questions like: How did we come to think of ourselves as human? What does it mean exactly to be consciously human? What is the intellectual status of nonhuman

entities, such as animals, machines (computers), God, etc.? In my reflections on God, or theism, being influenced by Leslie Dewart, I prefer a critical philosophy of consciousness rather than the classical philosophy of epistemology.

Basically, what is at stake in posthuman philosophy is a conscious rethinking of the relationship between human agency and techno-digital fact. Posthuman consciousness links techno-digital facts to their origins within human experience. The words of Charles Møller capture the genesis of my perspective.

Revolution is out of date, outmoded, because the problems have become so complex, for instance from the economic and social point of view, that the best way to spoil everything is to work in a whirlwind. What is required is patience, attention, competence. ... What is of primary importance is interhuman relations. If we are not successful in creating among men, clans, races, nations, a consciousness of humanity, we will never get anywhere.³⁶

Life presents different experiences, each true, but not necessarily in any classical manner as had been previously taught. I have been educated via the traditional Western philosophical and scientific syllabus. Accepting the content of this syllabus was the means to attain to the truth. I was taught that to know the truth was one of life's ends and purposes. To reach out and grasp truth through intellectual activity was the philosophically approved method.

But, in my later years this proved unsatisfactory. I needed a philosophy of consciousness, not epistemology to make satisfactory judgements within my life-world. Human life, obviously, is a necessary pre-requisite for consciousness which is the *sine qua non* of philosophy. Further, conscious life is the *sine qua non* of the human being, and it is necessary for thought. Notice that computers, which are not alive do not think, nor are they conscious — they merely compute. However, humanity reasons and computers are made to help humanity in its reasoning. (I recall that as a student I typed my thoughts on a typewriter made for typing, not thinking.)

³⁶ "Renewal of the Doctrine of Man" in *Renewal of Religious Structures, Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada 1867-1967* Vol.2 Palm Publishers (1968:437).

I may give myself to life's work, life's objectives and purposes, but fail to give myself to life itself. A philosophy that offers me only causes that explain my life's work, objectives and purposes, dissatisfies me. My dissatisfaction probably arises because such a philosophy reduces my life to a technological science void of conscious decision-making. To alleviate this dissatisfaction, I must consciously assign meaning to my life and not simply accept the explanations of a scientific discipline. In assigning meaning to my life, I differentiate both my character (qualities) and presence (being) within the cosmos from that which is "not-me." In my philosophical contemplation, I experience my being as that which is finite, not that which is infinite. From this perspective it is reasonable to conclude that reality alone is infinite, yet I temporarily participate in it.

Currently, my understanding of reality is that which, in which, I live. Reality is not beside me, with me, nor does it pervade through me. Rather, reality is that which I am *in* as a "me" among others which are "not-me." Philosophically, reality is and remains an unknown "necessity" for me to exist. Thus, I live in a philosophical mystery, not in an intellectual puzzle, and I experience aspects of that existential mystery as concrete and as transcendent or imaginative. Were my life merely a puzzle I would be able ultimately to solve it scientifically. Further, this existential mystery is the source of my seemingly incurable restlessness, until perhaps, I shall learn to rest in it as St Augustine realized long ago.

Reality cannot be totally, but only partially, comprehended in human consciousness. That is so since life constitutes reality. Life is dynamic and comprehended only limitedly by the human organism participating in it. life. To my mind, it is of the "nature" of life to communicate itself fully to the individual organism, infrahuman and human. Yet, it can be received only partially by them. However, the infrahuman organism has purpose as assigned by human agency. For the infrahuman being, meaning is not purposeful until consciously deemed so by a human being. For the human being meaning and purpose are self-assigned. Thus, the self-conscious human being a manifestation of an autonomous purposeful life.

14. A POSTHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD

My world is not determined by the dominant ideas of ancient Greek philosophy. As a Western Christian I live, as many of the contemporary faithful do, with the anxiety and tensions felt in the religious and spiritual life that come with the end of conventional Christianity. Yet, within these anxieties and tensions I see alternative approaches developing within philosophy that lead to a new consciousness in light of a posthuman future. One less successful approach is to abandon critical philosophy altogether and live a “wysiwyg” life-style; *what you see is what you get*. This is a fatalist approach to life retaining the Greek philosophical legacy. A more successful approach, although it still retains the influence of Hellenistic philosophy, is to radically re-define or update classical terminology, a philosophical *aggiornamento*, as it were. However, this approach assumes that no true evolutionary change can occur in philosophical concepts. There is a third approach that is the more appropriate choice. It is the process of dehellenization which enables philosophers to consciously create a future life-world through a process of *ressourcement* of the sources of belief. I suggest that such a shift to a posthuman *ressourcement* of the sources of belief ultimately would lead to the theological realization that the presence of God subsists in various denominations.

Through my contemplation of the presence of God, I consciously transcend the boundaries of my creaturely existence in such a way that I come to understand life holistically. Through a holistic understanding, that is, through a transcendental perspective in which I am other and greater than the totality of all my individual parts. And, I do mean a *holistic*, not a *wholistic*, perspective. These words which are often understood as similar, or simply as a variant in the spelling of one another are, in fact, not identical in meaning. Holistic is defined as denoting a phenomenological notion whose meaning exceeds the boundaries of an organism, whereas, wholistic denotes the classical idea whose meaning is confined to the boundaries of the organism. A holistic understanding replaces the classic objective idea of God “out there” with that of the posthuman notion of the felt presence

of God “nearby.” That is to say, holistic meaning is without boundaries, whereas wholistic meaning is within boundaries.

In addition to those academics who have a professional interest in phenomenological philosophy, this account may be of interest to the impulsive and untutored reader of philosophy who decides to undertake something different and challenge his or her intellect with an unfamiliar topic. With such individuals in mind, then, and without formal introduction to a *theological philosophy*, I cut directly to the chase and suggest philosophical thresholds appropriate to postmodernity. I begin by contemplating upon one’s consciousness of the presence of God as a mystery within Catholicity.

I distinguish between speculative language and qualitative language. Speculative language belongs to classical philosophy, whereas qualitative language belongs to phenomenological philosophy. In English, nouns with the suffixes “-ism” and “-ity,” characterize classical and phenomenological language respectively. The first, “-ism” is a suffix attached to nouns to mean a distinctive theory, doctrine, or system, usually used disparagingly; and the second, “-ity” is a suffix attached to nouns to mean a state, condition, or quality. The following terms, often used in discussions in philosophy and theology, illustrate this distinction: spiritualism vs. spirituality; materialism vs. materiality; personalism vs. personality; humanism vs. humanity; nationalism vs. nationality; historicism vs. historicity; Catholicism vs. Catholicity; individualism vs. individuality; modernism vs. modernity; dualism vs. duality; rationalism vs. rationality; moralism vs. morality; Deism vs. Deity; etc. But it should be remembered that there are exceptions to this pattern. The term “holism” is a phenomenological notion with no classical linguistic counterpart of which I am aware.

This account of a posthuman consciousness of God, is a product of my philosophical contemplation, and not a chronological history of theological development. Nor is it a catechetical account in the tradition of scholastic theology. Rather, it is a philosophical reflection written to clarify for me, as well as the reader, a phenomenological understanding of pre-Vatican II and Vatican II philosophical concepts in light of a notion of Catholicity, not of Catholicism.

As a Catholic in choosing to undertake a philosophical contemplation on the presence of God, I select the ecclesia as the initial *locus* of my contemplation. That is, what does the church have to say about the presence of God in my life. My particular ecclesia is the Roman Catholic Church whose theology is primarily supported, for the present time at least, by classical philosophy. A sociological inquiry into the presence of God may provide religious knowledge about a religious culture, but it cannot demonstrate any theological meaning concerning the presence of God to the believer. In other words, sociologists are not theologians and cannot access “the mind of God.” (Truthfully though, I have never met a sociologist who has made that claim.) As a theologian, I have experienced the philosophical limitations of Catholicism as expressing the faith. But I have also experienced the philosophical openness of Catholicity in doing the same. However, even though Catholicity is free from the boundaries of Catholicism, it is limited by the contingent and subjective consciousness of the person.

I encounter the presence of God by the same process that I encounter the presence of any person, that is, through a mutual self-giving. But, phenomenologically understood the presence of God is does not constitute one *entity* among others. Yet, the presence of God relates to me and I relate to it. This relationship to be properly understood requires a critical philosophical and theological consciousness. As a philosopher and as a theologian, I recognize that philosophy and theology are different from Revelation. They are not to be equated. In my experience, philosophy and theology originate with humanity as products of the human intellect, whereas, Revelation originates with the presence of God. George Tyrrell expressed it this way: “Revelation offers us mysteries of Faith; theology endeavours to translate them from the language of prophecy into that of science, and to harmonize these translations with the whole system of our understanding.”³⁷ As a phenomenological philosopher, I become conscious of present presence of God *indirectly* as a reasonable hypothesis. As a phenomenological theologian, however, I become

³⁷ Tyrrell, George (1906:viii) *Lex Credendi: A Sequel to Lex Orandi* Longmans, Green.

conscious of the present presence of God as having been *directly* revealed (experienced) within the physical phenomena of my life-world. I do not mean pantheism or panentheism by this statement. Through a phenomenological approach, I observe traces of God's active present presence directly. In other words, through philosophy I *understand* the gift of the presence God; through theology, I *encounter* the giver of that gift.

Understood phenomenologically, my relationship with the presence of God defies objectivism but not objectivity. Objectivism is an idea that belongs to Hellenized philosophy and preserves the past. Objectivity, on the other hand, is a notion that belongs to phenomenological philosophy and is open to the future. Thus, the challenge presented to me is either to remain a custodian of the past, by retaining a Hellenized philosophy, or to become an architect of the future by co-creating within the presence of God. Should I ever factor out the presence of God in creating my future, I will have removed that which individuates me as a human being. As an individuated human being and having chosen to create my future life-world, I realize that I am truly other and greater than the sum of my individual parts. That is to say, my life-world unfolds within the Catholicity inaugurated at Vatican II (not within Catholicism.)

In phenomenological philosophy the notion of an evolutionary consciousness means the humanity is no longer characterized merely as a thinking animal. This notion of a human evolutionary process presented problems in my understanding of philosophy and theology when I was of the classical mind-set. Solutions began to appear, however, once I decided that static philosophical ideas must be abandoned in favour of dynamic philosophical notions.

Human society is composed of a variety of cultures which suggest that human beings are destined for a higher purpose in life than infrahuman organisms. Within phenomenological interpretation this higher purpose for human beings is assigned within the material world of incardinated individuals and not imported from an ideal world of disembodied metaphysics. In the

Catholic perspective, humanity is at the summit of earthly life.³⁸ Yet, humanity may potentially extend itself beyond its incarnated limitations and boundaries. And, both phenomenological and classical Christian philosophers agree that humanity's ultimate purpose is to continue beyond its terrestrial self.

Within the history of the people of Israel, and I mean their salvation history, the church may be interpreted as a phenomenological mystery disclosed in both the Old and New Testaments. The spirit of the risen Christ has called into being a phenomenological community constituted in faith, hope and charity. This divine call was realized without intending any necessary political structure. Various governing structures were developed subsequently to the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The mystery of the spirit of the risen Christ, then, constitutes an interpretive challenge to the traditional presence of God in salvation history.

15. THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRIST IN POSTHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

If one accepts that Christian revelation ceased with the death of the last apostle, the difference between Catholicity and Catholicism becomes significant. Catholicism characterizes an unfulfilling past, whereas Catholicity suggests a fulfilling future. Initially, George Tyrrell experienced Catholicism as a fulfilling way of life which accounted for his conversion to Catholicism. He wrote that he cared for Catholicism more as life, and less as philosophical truth. Eventually, however, he would discover that "theological truth," for the Church of Rome of his day, was more important than "life."

Catholicity does not identify a body of doctrine given to the church about Jesus of Nazareth. Catholicism does that. Rather, Catholicity engages the spirit of the Christ as revealed through the ecclesia. The spirit of the Christ does not reveal a body of doctrine about Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, it reveals its own presence in the

³⁸ "Believers and unbelievers agree almost unanimously that all things on earth should be ordained to humanity as to their centre and summit." *Gaudium et Spes*, para. 12 in Flannery, Austin (1996:174) *Vatican Council II* Costello.

life-world of the faithful. The spirit of the risen Christ, being active, appropriates to its purposes those cultural experiences of the individual and the community that are most effective in establishing its presence to the believer. From my experience, the spirit of the risen Christ inspires believers to develop doctrine within the church. But this doctrinal development is not through the multiplication of propositions or formulas, nor is it terminal. It develops via a conscious encounter with the same spirit that animated Jesus of Nazareth. In short, doctrinal development heightens the consciousness of the believer. Thus, the true teacher in the church is the spirit of the Christ acting immediately in and through the whole body of the faithful, that is the *sensus fidelium*.

Reading the works of Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274) who had a charismatic gift for theologizing, it seems to me that the significance of his particular theological insight is lost to many theologians today. This is unfortunate because the version of Thomistic understanding, which continues to dominate the official teaching of the contemporary church, often impedes the charismatic spirit that should animate theologians just as it did Jesus of Nazareth. History and experience indicate to me that the spirit of Christ can act outside the official Church. That is, it is possible for me to experience the spirit of the Christ outside the *visible* church, yet not outside the Church of Christ itself. To my mind, a posthuman universal consciousness is what Vatican II intended when it affirmed that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church (*Lumen Gentium*, para. 8).

Since Western society searches for a better world often without seeking a better philosophical explanation of its experience than the one it has inherited, it needs to re-assess its philosophical inheritance. This search for a better world has often led some theologians to abandon not just their inherited philosophy, but also their faith. They have become atheists with the intent of improving their lives and the lives of those around them. Interestingly, it was only later in my philosophical contemplation that I became aware that Christianity is the only religion to have generated the notion of atheism. The fact is that sincere atheists and anti-theists both offer a significant challenge to a posthuman theological philosophy.

16. DEEPENING POSTHUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

As I see it, much theological development within the ecclesia arises through the insight, not of ecclesiastical officials, but of the faithful individuals (*simplices fideles*) interpreting their experiences. The understanding of the faithful has often been different from that of the ecclesiastical officials whose role is to correct and modify the formal teaching of the church. Attaining theological insight is a responsibility of the faithful according to Auguste Sabatier.³⁹ In their theological understanding, the faithful are to seek a contemporary interpretation of God's activity in the world, even if that task takes away from their traditional understanding. From Sabatier's perspective, the task of the faithful is nothing less than assisting in establishing new forms of theological interpretation within the Christian religion. It has been my experience that theological consciousness develops, and continues to develop, both on an individual and collective basis. My theological understanding is potentially significant for everyone in the community. Thus, the degree to which the community and I can share our conscious theological insights establishes our degree of unity.

It is almost a truism that when inherited gods die, most people do not become atheists. Rather, they invent new gods or return to the pre-theoretical gods of folklore. However, these new gods, or the gods of folklore, do not always prove to be a satisfactory replacement. Similarly, when inherited philosophies and theologies die, most people do not stop thinking philosophically and theologically. They turn to new philosophies and theologies or recast pre-theoretical folklore in contemporary terms. In my case, turning to posthuman phenomenological philosophy rather than retaining classical philosophy led me to new insights and creative relationships within my life-world.

The controversial issues in theology, those issues introduced by the scientific knowledge of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were discussed in North America as pastoral or practical issues

³⁹ *Religions of Authority and the Religion of Spirit* [1899] Kessinger Publishing Reprint 2003.

rather than theoretical and speculative ones. The reverse was the case on the Continent of Europe. There was more interest in theory than in practice on the Continent. Today, in a Western posthuman context, I highly doubt that scholasticism can remain as a suitable philosophy for the majority of the faithful.

The mission of the ecclesia remains *primarily* salvific, that is, concerned with the saving of souls. But this mission must be understood differently by philosophers than by theologians in a posthuman context. The mission of the ecclesia is *secondarily* a mission for justice in the sense of the political and social order. In its primary posthuman mission, the ecclesia will not of necessity be bound to any particular culture or philosophical system. Phenomenologically understood, the mission of the ecclesia transcends the temporal history of the People of God, yet paradoxically, the ecclesia is mysteriously incarnated into the salvation history of the People of God.

In its nature and mission, the church has always been philosophically and theologically universal, but not in any manner of absolute intellectual uniformity. (The Eastern churches are a case in point.) In its universality the ecclesia can function as a bond among communities of peoples as well as nations, provided these peoples and nations recognize and trust their experience of each other. It follows that these peoples and nations then must guarantee the intellectual and physical freedom of theologians, allowing them to carry out the church's mission.

In the contemporary theological climate, there is an interest in the individual as a person from a psychological point of view. Diramuid O'Murchu, a contemporary Catholic author, whose psychological understanding reflects a model for the non-clinical development of the person, seems to have had an experience similar to that of George Tyrrell. Tyrrell's understanding of the psychological development of the person contrasts with the clinical model of psychological development which tends to address the pathological issues of personality. O'Murchu writes that his personal faith journey, from a non-pathological perspective, included many conscious transitions in which new ways of understanding superseded those which he previously had conceived as unalterable or, according to official teaching, could

never change and therefore should never be abandoned.⁴⁰ Similarly, when new ways of understanding supersede my present understanding, it is because I am not living as one individual within creation. Rather, I am living as an active agent, a co-creator with the presence of God.

My ability to revise the meaning of my life-world as new data becomes available is possible because I am open to that which is transcendent in my life. And this relationship to such transcendence reveals a dimension to my life which I recognize as not mere metaphysics, but which is tantamount to a spiritual consciousness, and mysteriously beyond metaphysics.

17. PRELIMINARIES TO POSTHUMAN THRESHOLDS

The Abstract to Leslie Dewart's PhD thesis (1954) "Development of Karl Pearson's Scientific Philosophy,"⁴¹ serves as a useful introduction to understanding a threshold of philosophical posthumanity. In light of my perspective in this book I reproduce the Abstract to his thesis, placing in bold some significant phrases.

The importance of Karl Pearson's development of statistics with regard to the methodology of contemporary science, especially the social sciences, is generally well appreciated. It is not widely recognized, however, that Pearson has a complex and systematic philosophy which stands behind his statistical theory. This present study investigates that philosophical background, especially with reference to the doctrinal development which led to Pearson's view of the nature of science and of scientific inference. The study reaches the conclusions that (a) Pearson's scientific philosophy, throughout its inception, development and up to its culmination, is a **religious philosophy**, or at least an ethical one; (b) the final formulation of Pearson's philosophy in *The Grammar of Science* is best understood as the answer to the difficulties he saw in his earlier moral and political philosophy; (c) Pearson's

⁴⁰ *Religion in Exile: A Spiritual Homecoming* Crossroad 2000.

⁴¹ Awarded by the University of Toronto. [Karl Pearson 1857-1936, was a British statistician].

fully developed view is that, since **knowledge is identical with virtue and religion**, and since science is the only true and reliable type of knowledge, then science is the only reliable basis of religious and moral thought.

Since his undergraduate days Pearson was keenly interested in religion, and he seems to have been especially affected by the opposition of science and religion current in the thought of his time. Pearson held that science had effectively shown that revealed religion could not rightly claim to possess truth. But he also held that man has certain religious needs which science as such can neither deny nor satisfy. Hence, **his problem was to find a “creed of life,” a set of basic truths and moral axioms which would harmonize religious feeling and reason.**

Pearson's first systematic attempt to evolve such a creed constitutes his doctrine of *freethought*. Pearson's freethought, in the first place, identifies God and Nature, primarily on the grounds that only such a conception of God is compatible with science, but also because it is the least anthropomorphic way in which we can project our own selves and our own desires into our environment. Freethought is also humanistic and rationalistic: man is the highest value of the universe; human activity is an end in itself, especially the typically human activity of knowing or understanding, for it is only by and in this activity that man becomes at one with God that is Nature. Evidently, then, virtue is identical with knowledge: only the wise man is good, “the ignorant cannot be moral.” Freethought is also socialistic, since moral values emerge only in human association. Political socialism is nothing but the extension of freethought into the field of science: it is, therefore, a new political morality which is to triumph, not through revolution but through education, i.e., through the acquisition of knowledge-virtue by the people. Freethought, therefore, is, perhaps, best characterized as a *gnosticism*, since by its very nature it proclaims that the deliverance and salvation of man lie only in knowledge.

But if the answer to every problem is given by *knowledge*, then the nature of knowledge becomes a fundamental question; hence Pearson's growing concern with it in order to

consolidate the advances of freethought, Pearson was convinced that metaphysics (i.e. dogmatic, non-empirical, rationalistic philosophy) does not give reliable knowledge. Science is reliable, but it does not seem to be the highest possible knowledge, for it is concerned only with the description of facts: scientific laws merely describe the how and not the why. Moreover, there are positive indications that we may reach a science not merely of the factual, but of the necessary; the possibility of applying mathematics to physical data, for example, arouses the expectation of an ascertainable rationality or necessity underlying the *facts* of the world.

The Grammar of Science constitutes Pearson's final solution to this question, Pearson discovered, it seems, that any answer to the problem of the nature of science rests on a prior position taken with regard to the nature of reality. The dilemma of a science of facts without necessity, or a philosophy of necessity without facts, can be avoided, he thought, provided one transcends the dichotomies of object and subject, matter and mind. Hence his identification of phenomena and reality: sense data are the only reality, and they are reality none the less for their being sensations. Phenomenalism neither takes away anything from the world nor denies any observable fact; it merely refrains from making artificial, abstract dichotomies and from passing unnecessary judgments. Now, phenomena occur in more or less typical patterns and varying routines, but these patterns and routines, which in themselves are only facts in the world, are patterns and routines for the mind which grasps them, and only for a mind. In this sense it could well be said that the order of nature comes from (i.e. is recognized only by) the mind. The necessary, therefore, is not at variance with the factual. What happens, happens necessarily, i.e. there is no reason why it should happen otherwise, and therefore it must be as it is.

It is true, therefore, that all science is descriptive and that all scientific laws are, and will forever remain, descriptions of fact and not reasons why. On the other hand, *association*, the limiting case of which is causality, has a very important place in science. Indeed, it is through this broader category of association, and not through causality, that mathematics enters

scientific methodology. By means of statistics, which is the *organon* of science, the scientist can derive inferences from incomplete enumeration, a knowledge quite precise because attended by a coefficient which denotes the degree of certainty which attaches to the conclusion. For example, statistics provide a numerical index of the degree of correlation between variables. Similarly, by means of statistics the scientist is enabled accurately “to calculate the future from the past, the very essence of scientific *knowledge*.”

Science, therefore, as it is described and justified in *The Grammar of Science*, is the basis of freethought. Philosophy, (as distinguished from metaphysics) is converted into the grammar of science; it is not important in itself, but only in relation to the science to which it is both propaedeutic and apologetic. Even science itself is not important for its own sake but rather for its moral (i.e. practical and social) consequences. Hence, after *The Grammar of Science*, Pearson turned towards the development of the theory of statistics and, having set it on a sound basis, devoted himself to the more virtuous (i.e. of more practical and social value) pursuit of National Eugenics,⁴² in which “creed of action” he was to persevere until the end of his life.

The Abstract, I suggest, sets the course that Dewart’s thought follows throughout his philosophical career. This can be confirmed (a little intellectual effort will be needed) by consulting Dewart’s subsequent works in which he develops his theological philosophy.

In 1966 Leslie Dewart (1922-2009) published a book entitled, *The Future of Belief: Theism in a World Come of Age*, containing philosophical ideas sufficiently revolutionary as to attract the attention of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Even though, as a result of their investigation of this book, no condemnation was issued by the Congregation, but it was reported that the Congregation asked Dewart not to authorize further editions of the book, a request which the author refused.⁴³ That book has had a great influence on some contemporary

⁴² Cf. *Journal of Heredity*, Volume 29, Issue 2, February 1938, Pp 71–72, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jhered.a104457>.

⁴³ *Contemporary Authors* Vols 9-12, 1st Revision, Gale Publishing (1974:226-27).

philosophers, including myself. Naturally there is more to Dewart's philosophy than has been addressed by him in that book and by me in this book. For a full appreciation of Dewart's philosophy, the reader will need to refer to Dewart's corpus of works.

In light of Dewart's insights, I investigate a *philosophical* theory that characterizes the thresholds of a posthuman philosophy. In a posthuman context an appropriate philosophical approach is needed to help clarify issues concerning thresholds of a posthuman philosophy. In posthuman philosophy, I suggest that causality is best understood not as a necessary force, internally or externally. That is so since natural selection (originally Darwin's contribution to philosophy) shows that causality is a proper activity, not force, of an individual organism maintaining its life for the continuation of the species.

Natural selection, or causality, operates differently in the brute animal than in the human animal. Biochemical processes operate for both brute and human life to appear. However, these processes are not the cause of life. Characteristics that uniquely and properly specify the human being are lacking in the brute. The evolutionary process that reflects a particular understanding of the biochemical reactions, is a proper carry-over into posthuman philosophy from humanistic philosophy. This evolutionary carry-over into posthuman philosophy reflects an "open" system of interpretation of the world. Unlike in humanistic philosophy, in posthuman philosophy, effects are not necessarily what their causes seem to indicate or determine. In posthuman philosophy, effects may be otherwise than they have been understood and interpreted.

Effects, being otherwise interpreted, prompt the question: does the philosophical understanding of "humanism" ultimately lead to the understanding of "posthumanism," as variation on a theme, or as a unique philosophical attitude in its own right? Within Western philosophy, some philosophers assume that when they know what humanism is, they potentially know what posthumanism is. Applying this principle, some posthuman philosophers want to go further and try to account for any *common* physical characteristics of the human being and the non-human being, (brute, as well as robotic) and *simultaneously*, identify the qualitative *differences* characteristic of each.

A presumption held by posthuman critical philosophers is that only human life possesses a *specifying consciousness*. Critical philosophers acknowledge that knowing a cause does not equate to knowing, or potentially demonstrating, the effect. Posthuman critical philosophers understand that culture is a *form* of reproduction (and creation) of the human organism and is required in order for the organism to become human. Cultural reproduction (and creation) is as necessary as is organic sexual reproduction in human and posthuman evolution. Natural selection generates *communication* in infrahuman animals and *speech* in human animals. If Leslie Dewart's insights are accurate, and I accept that they are, human speech, not natural selection, further generates *consciousness* through a "me" vs "not-me" identification.

In 1989, before the terms posthuman and transhuman were in philosophical fashion, Leslie Dewart was able to note that a new consciousness was signaled by the invention of the computer. In particular, computers displaying what is misleadingly called "artificial intelligence." The invention of computers is significant because like phonetic writing it may prove to be the cause of cultural changes comparable only to the changes of the Sumerian writing system. It is currently possible to build computers that understand spoken instructions and reply accordingly, that can translate from one human language to another, that exercise judgment on the basis of data input, and that seem to think and reason in the ways that are distinguishable from the human processes only in being more reliable and faster. Of course, a computer that computes verbal instructions and responds with intelligible sounds no more *understands* speech than a typewriter that *thinks* and *communicates* the user's wisdom by typing out a textbook. It is the human being who uses both the typewriter and computer, and by means of it *performs* these activities. Using a computer that has been programmed to perform tasks that surpass what a person could do manually has led to increased productivity, i.e. the Espresso Book-making Machine.

Many people are philosophically unclear about the difference between the *activity* and the *contents* of thought and they assume that "artificial intelligence" is possible. They are thus inspired to create it. Ironically, not knowing any better facilitates their success. They analyse human speech and thought in order to

recreate these processes electronically in computers. Now, if they took into account the content of speech and thought, they would realize that the requirement for producing speech and thought is a self-oriented causal process that is found only in living organisms and not in machines. They mistakenly conceive that the human capabilities of speech and thought can be electronically reproduced in machines, and are not merely imitated or mechanically replicated. In the final analysis, artificial intelligence is not a true counterpart of these human capabilities. Now, *why* should “artificial intelligence” be created? And for what *ends* should it be used once it is created? These questions will not be adequately answered either by scientists, nor by the perplexed consumers of scientific technology who defer to them, but they do provide examples of posthuman philosophical thresholds.⁴⁴

Upon reflection I find myself at posthuman thresholds that I did not make or design. They arose from a quality of mind known as human consciousness. Human consciousness led me to thresholds of postmodernity that reject the classical idea of epistemology. This turning point in my philosophical thinking took place later in my career. About the same time there was also a turning point in that which I understood as sacred. I no longer considered the Constantinian Church as a sacred institution in itself, rather its members are sacred. The feudal and monarchical thinking which gave the social structure to the visible church is a non-sacred human political construction. Indeed, since this turning point in my understanding I now accept that the true church is often to be found among those who have been excommunicated from the visible Church. As well, I am conscious that those who are not members of the visible church may enjoy the benefits of its presence as a corporation within society. This does not mean that those outside the visible corporate limits of the Church are not members of the Church of Christ in some manner.

⁴⁴ The foregoing reflection on computers has been freely drawn from Dewart (1989:307, n. 4). *Evolution and Consciousness: The Role of Speech in the Origin and Development of Human Nature* University of Toronto Press.

18. POSTHUMAN IDENTITY

After World War I, a new Western world was born, as it were. However, as J. Middleton Murry noted, it was really not a new world but the old one clearly seen for the first time.⁴⁵ It was a new world for those for whom the lines of cultural demarcation were understood entirely differently from what they had seemed to be. This new world, at first, seemed cold, alien and hostile. Yet soon afterwards it appeared to have fresh hope as new insights were revealed and new lessons learned from a past and broken world. This is where I am today. That is, I continue to learn new lessons and insights about life from my past humanistic and somewhat broken, philosophical world.

In consideration of a posthuman faith life, I continue to seek deeper insights into the presence of God. I have come to realize that it is not how accurate I am in my understanding that is important, but rather how truthfully, I interpret my experience. I am not seeking objective truth concerning my experience, but I am seeking an authentic interpretation of my experience in contrast to illusion or fantasy which are tricks of an imagining mind. In other words, I seek what is truly real. And, any authentic interpretation I make must be made in light of the philosophical changes taking place in contemporary Western society. As I contemplate the changes in my life-world, I see that phenomenological philosophy is not readily accepted by many of my contemporaries as a means of achieving authenticity. Not everyone accepts that the phenomenological method is one that satisfies and clarifies. To some, in fact, the phenomenological method obscures their understanding and thus dissatisfies them. Yet, in my case the opposite has occurred. Over time, I came to the conclusion that scholasticism with its dichotomous structure of philosophical understanding hindered my thinking.

I do realize, of course, that the limitations of scholasticism are the limitations traceable to a particular time and culture. They are the limitations of a philosophical language and speech that have not kept pace with modern experience. In my case, not even a

⁴⁵ *The Evolution of the Intellectual* 1927 Jonathan Cape.

revised form of scholasticism satisfactorily overcame these limitations. The revised form of scholasticism to which I refer is neo-Thomism. Through neo-Thomism I was not able to express satisfactorily my experience. However, given a phenomenological interpretation of my experience in light of a non-dichotomous relational unity, I was able to interpret satisfactorily my experience and thereby overcome the limitations of scholasticism. Now I am able to contrast my present experience with my past experience and act consciously to create a posthuman life-world. This means that I live within my cultural limitations, but I need not be constrained by them. I experienced these cultural limitations in my past life-world governed by a philosophy of classical humanism, however, I need not experience them in my posthuman life-world. I attempt to transcend them even if success is only partial.

In my posthuman life-world the interpretive task is contingent and perpetual. As an existential thinker, I know that there is no such thing as a final philosophy or theology. I conceive my work as different from the work of the theologian in the days when the humanistic philosophical systems of the West were being constructed. As I see it, the task of the contemporary religious philosopher and theologian is as follows. It is to make known the truthfulness of *reasoned belief* in and about God to a new generation of Western philosophers through a phenomenological approach to philosophy, that is, through a dehellenized philosophy. I find that the principle merit and usefulness of a dehellenized philosophy is its capacity for giving a human identity to experience. Philosophy is culturally influenced. But, unlike classical philosophers, posthuman philosophers choose not to conform to a given system of knowledge, nor a methodology of established norms. Posthuman philosophy presents an alternative conscious understanding and as such it can utilize any methodology of interpretation. To my mind, any philosophy, even the untutored sort, can provide some degree of satisfaction in religious interpretation.

History shows that natural theology, viewed by some as a type of philosophy and as a discipline in its own right, originated outside the Western Catholic ecclesiastical tradition. Natural theology, as a philosophy, is the proper way of inquiring into the world as created by God, rather than inquiring into God as revealed

in the world. St Thomas held to this distinction, according to Edward Schillebeeckx.⁴⁶ As an ecclesial theologian, I am required to interpret revelation within the *sensus fidelium*, that is, within the understanding of the faithful who constitute the church. But as a philosopher of theology I am not limited to the ecclesial context.

For any serious philosophy and theology to bear fruit in the posthuman context, it must engage the personal (qualitative) and existential (quantitative) creative experience of the faithful. At one point in the process of evaluating my inherited philosophical understanding, I compared and contrasted the thought of George Tyrrell to that of Leslie Dewart. I then compared their thoughts with my own philosophical understanding. In this comparison, I found it unfortunate that, at this time in the development of Western philosophy and theology, the place of philosophy in relation to theology has been usurped to a great extent by sociology and psychology. Those readers who may not be philosophically inclined, but who gravitate to sociology and psychology, may discover new insights should they persevere in reading these pages.

Posthuman thinking represents a shift away from the old style of theological polemics towards a new approach of ecumenical cooperation among Western theologians. For such thinkers, theology, which traditionally has been influenced by classical philosophy, has shifted to a discursive theology, often interpreted through phenomenological approach. It was within this context of a discursive theology that I was able to make sense of my personal experience. And in making sense of my experience, I found that I had to undertake an existential approach to tell of my experience. Being a theologian, understanding God's presence is a particular focus in my life. My theological preoccupation has its roots in the Roman Catholic theological perspective that was in vogue in the early 20th century, particularly that of the *Nouvelle Théologie*. It was through this model of theologizing that I found the beginnings of fresh insights leading to posthuman thresholds of theological insight.

One intention of this book is to draw the reader's attention to the fact that many creative and insightful contributions from

⁴⁶ *Revelation and Theology* 1967 Sheed and Ward.

philosophers and theologians are often quoted and discussed by academics and professional journalists. These reviewers and professionals often truly believe they have understood, and correctly expounded the ideas of innovative theological thinkers. And in most cases, they probably have done so, but not always. George Tyrrell's life-story of creative and innovative theologizing is a case in point. The appreciation of his style of creative and innovative thinking is not as well recognized as it could be among professional theologians. Although to the discerning reader of his books his influence on theology at the time of Vatican II is readily discernable. The majority of academics have discussed Tyrrell from an historical perspective, often in relation to the Modernist Crisis in the Roman Catholic Church. David Schultenover in his book described, not the Modernist Movement and Tyrrell's role in it, but the intellectual development of a major contributor to that movement by focusing on the man and his thought.⁴⁷

Two modern crucial developments offer some rationale for the creative tensions that exist within the contemporary Western philosophical and theological tradition, that are also significant for posthuman thinking. The first is that medieval Christendom has come to an end and secularism exists in its wake. The other development is that a psychological understanding of the person has taken the place of a philosophical understanding of the person.

One of the often-heard criticisms of Modernity is that it sets up a false confidence in rationalism and science. Given their capacity in categorizing and explaining human experience, rationalism and science are often seen as being able to convey the totality of human experience. Once I realized that this could not ultimately be the case, that neither of them could convey the totality of human experience, I favoured a posthuman approach which directed me away from the dichotomous Hellenic understanding still evident in the sciences. The phenomenological approach permits me to establish a non-dichotomous relationship to others in my life-world.

The social institution in which I originally framed my theology is the church. Exploring all the various denominations within the church is a specialized theological discipline called ecclesiology.

⁴⁷ George Tyrrell: *In Search of Catholicism* 1981 Patmos.

The differing interpretations of the sacred texts by these denominations, plus the political, philosophical, and historical reform movements occurring among them contributed to a diverse self-understanding of the church. In a posthuman philosophical context, the church will most likely not be a social arrangement *imposed* upon the faithful. Rather, the church will be disclosed as a communion of communities *constituted* by the faithful, each community with its own self-understanding, history, culture and tradition.

There is a variety of expression in the church which reflects the variety of local cultures. Because of the relationship in the West between philosophy and theology, my contention for many years has been that the theological problems of the churches are preceded by philosophical problems, left unsolved by the Modernists, which need to be first addressed and resolved.⁴⁸ Then, one may address the theological problems and their solutions. I indicated earlier that I began forming this view during my undergraduate years when I studied philosophy and was introduced to the theological perspective of George Tyrrell, (1861-1909). In addition, the philosophical insights of one of my professors at St Michael's College, University of Toronto, Leslie Dewart, (1922-2009), motivated me to consciously reform my convictions. It was Leslie Dewart's understanding of "dehellenization," a philosophical notion which he did not present as a negative concept, meaning "unhellenization," that provided a conscious opportunity for me to begin to evaluate my philosophical inheritance.

Theologians who theologize formally on behalf of a believing community, are required to think as professionals, as it were. However, pre-modern society and culture were not oriented to professionalism, but to authoritarianism. A hierarchical order is the

⁴⁸ Maude Peter, commenting on the future of Catholicism, writes that "the modernist will gladly admit that, whatsoever his hopes in the future of Catholicism may be, there are outstanding problems yet unsolved, and that the case, as he leaves it, is incomplete. Yet this lack of finality is not discouraging to the modern mind, depressing as it may be to that attitude of dogmatic certitude which it is, in the opinion of the modernist, doomed to supplant." *Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits* (1918:212) T. C. & E. C. Jack, Ltd.

requisite form for any authoritarian organization structured for absolute government. In contrast, contemporary Western society and modern religious organizations are oriented toward professionalism, democracy and the principle of personal interpretation. Within the churches of the Reformation, the development of democratic governance is clearly evident. For the hierarchical churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, the principle of subsidiarity fulfills the intent of democratic governance.

Contemporary theologians, both Eastern and Western, are beginning to realize that the present structure of church government which reflects classical theism requires change. The present governing structure of the church is based on a territorial notion and not on a gift of God's grace, i.e., divine charism.⁴⁹ The notion of territorial jurisdiction is an obstacle to the ecclesial governance of the church today. (Note that I say "ecclesial governance," not "ecclesiastical government.") And, as such, the church must change in the posthuman context. Such territorial constructions will not fruitfully conform to the Christian's social condition in posthumanity. Further, it would be a theological error to promote any idea of a universal territorial super-church composed of all the faithful based on the philosophical notion of human political expediency.

My philosophical reflection suggests to me that a posthuman church would reveal a new ecclesiology that is based upon the relationships among the faithful, not on the theory of ecclesiastical territorial government. Traditional political *government* becomes *governance* when based on mutual mature relationships. Present day churches, in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, remain based on a notion of territorial jurisdiction. However, there is an option for future governance of these churches through an ecclesiology, one not territorially re-ordered, but one that is

⁴⁹ For an Orthodox perspective on "divine charism" Ferencz's words suffice, I believe. "The key for understanding the authority and structure of the Orthodox Church is the unity of the church and, to a lesser extent, its catholicity. The church must be one for it is the Body of Christ, which is one. No division or split can exist in this body, else it is not truly Christ's." Ferencz, Nicholas (2006:17) *American Orthodoxy and Parish Congregationalism* Gorgias Press.

reconstituted in light of a posthuman consciousness. Such an ecclesial possibility requires that I reappraise the development of my Christian theology. This is so because I am living in a culture that has not been envisioned or brought about only by one factor. My present culture is determined by many causes. Among them are physical, metaphysical, mental, human, and divine causes. Indeed, my present culture seems to be over-determined given the combination of these and other factors. By “over-determined” I mean no one factor can be held responsible for the direction and development of the culture in which I encounter the presence of God. Thus, I take this to mean that, in truth, God is not to be held solely responsible for everything that happens to me, or happens within the cosmos for that matter. That is to say that I have a role in the interpreting God’s participation in my life.

This role allows me to re-conceive of myself as a responsible co-agent in, and as a responsible co-creator of, my culture and society. Such is a posthuman state of consciousness through which I am able to work towards building the kingdom of God on earth within the presence of God. But not in any political sense. Rather, I understand it existentially. My co-participation in the divine creativity is the risk that God takes with me, as it were, which includes possible failure. Note the ironic prophetic remark, attributed to Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) about failure in the Kingdom of God: *Jésus annonçait le Royaume et c’est l’Église qui est venue*. (Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom and what arrived was the Church.)

The traditional Catholic understanding of the church is as old as the first epistle of St. Clement, (circa 75-110), in which the church is conceived as a divine institution. According to St. Clement, the church is an institution with officers whose duty is determined by an official status within the institution. In this understanding, the officers of the church are analogous to officers of the state. To my mind, Jesus of Nazareth would never contemplate endorsing any form of church government patterned on a model whose leaders were analogous to the state.⁵⁰ Further, it is clear that the apostles believed that the end of the world would occur within their lifetime, and they made no provision for an

⁵⁰ Cf. Mark 10:35-45.

institutional church in the sense that it exists today. Yet, the spirit that animates the church today is the same spirit that animated Jesus of Nazareth. I argue that this same spirit lays the foundations for thresholds in Catholicity, not Catholicism, in the posthuman context.

It must be remembered that while individual humans do exist, humanity does not. Humanity is an imaginative concept. Humanity, as an abstracted (imaginative) idea, is expressed through a variety of philosophical, political and cultural perspectives. Further, God may be conceived as immanently present, or conceived as absent (*via negativa*) in these philosophical, political and cultural perspectives. Victor Segesvary reminds us that the concept of humanity, understood as an existential community of individuals, is too large a concept to be the bearer of a single shared culture.⁵¹ In this respect, the posthuman world will not be that different from the world of the ancient cultures. It is, however, somewhat urgent that I find creative ways to interpret what I am likely to find unique in the experience of my posthuman life-world. However, in interpreting my posthuman life-world it is more responsible for me now to promote a reasoned philosophy rather than duplicate any previous cultural folklore in accounting for my experience. Psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, etc., assist me, to some degree, but it is only philosophy that is in the privileged position to support my theological reflection. In this reflection my task is to express, to clarify and deepen the understanding of my conscious development. In understanding my conscious development there are two pairs of terms not to be confused. They are “subjectivity” and “objectivity,” and “subjectivism” and “objectivism.” These pairs are not interchangeable. The former pair belongs to phenomenology and is qualitative. The latter pair belongs to scholasticism and is quantitative.

Platonic, and some neo-platonic philosophers, continue to subscribe to ideal forms in interpreting human experience. Yet, they do not admit to any reality of the relationships among these ideal forms. This understanding is not consistent with a posthuman

⁵¹ *World State, Nation States, or Non-Centralized Institutions? A Vision of the Future in Politics* 2003 University of America Press.

perspective in which the “space” between subject and object, i.e., person and thing, must itself be acknowledged in human experience. This is another way of distinguishing between “me” and “not-me.” As a phenomenologist, I hold to an existential relationship among entities and see no reason to accept the platonic theory of material forms. That is to say, reality is characterized by relationships rather than by ideals as in the classical philosophical sense. I have adopted this position because my philosophical contemplation of being has not supported the existence of the idea of material forms. Rather, I accept that all entities, be they living or non-living, are in a relational state among themselves.

Being conscious, I differentiate between that which is “me” and that which is “not-me.” I am aware of my conscious self, that is, “me,” as manifested through my body, yet differing from my body. I am also aware of “me” as distinguishable from other physical and meta-physical entities. In short, “I” am not my body. Neither am “I” my spirit, nor any meta-physical form separate from my body, i.e., my soul. Rather, as a human being, I experience myself as an incarnated entity (a unity of physical and metaphysical components) who is in a relationship with other beings, some incarnated like myself. By incarnated, I mean that I am an “in-the-flesh” living entity possessing a unique human mind, i.e. consciousness. As a human incarnation, I exist in such a way that I can relate myself to myself as well as to others. As a human incarnation, I do not experience myself as a dichotomized being, united by the joining of a body and a soul originally existing separately. However, I experience myself as an individuated being, differentiated from others as “me.” Whether the human soul is immortal or not, is another matter that does not concern me here.

In my dehellenized philosophy, I have recognized three unique moments of insight. They are: 1) the realization of my status as a reflexive thinker, 2) the realization of my individuality, that is, I am “this” and not “that,” and 3) the realization of my personal integrity. That is, I am not equivalent to my body or to my soul understood separately. I continue to become more deeply aware of the significance of these facts as my conscious understanding deepens.

My relationships are formed when I distinguish between “me” and “not me.” My relationships are not determined through any *a*

priori schema imported or imposed from outside of my experience, that is, from any pre-determined idealism, secular or religious. Through my relationships, I am conscious that I exist, not only for myself, but also for others. It is through my relationships with others that my identity occurs. Given my identity, I become aware of myself as an individual. And as an individual, I am able to place myself in an appropriate relationship with objects and living beings of whom I have become conscious and from whom I am differentiated.

I, as a person, do not have the structure of an inanimate object. Rather, I am a being whose constitution is greater than the sum of its individual parts. That is, as an incarnated individual person I am holistically constituted. The fact is that I am devoid of any fixed or final human construction, but not devoid of being perpetually constituted as human as long as I am alive. Being constituted as a human being necessitates a hylomorphic existence, but not necessarily Aristotelian.

Through the process of differentiation, which is how I think philosophically in a posthuman context, I become conscious of the temporal and the transcendental (metaphysical) aspects of my existence. In short, as a human being, I am a unity, not union, of physical and metaphysical components, which makes me who I am in the presence of God.

Concerning my unity there are questions that I have asked myself: Do I critically undertake to construct my future, or do I remain satisfied with my pre-critical status? The real problem is not whether the world will change or whether it will remain the same. The real problem is whether the world will change of its own accord, without my influencing presence, or whether it will be changed deliberately, consciously and with my participation.

While there is no possibility to return to the past, the shaping of my future life-world does require an analysis of the past without re-living it. In analyzing the past, I am conscious of myself, not as a static being, but as an active free agent in the presence of other active free agents within the presence of God. In constructing my future becoming I have not chosen a traditional philosophical view point, nor any foundation provided by an up-dated classical understanding. Rather, I have chosen to look to the future and

actualize myself in the present as an agent consciously bring about alternatives.

In my philosophical musings I have made the same discovery as many philosophers before me. That is, my relation to reality is a self-relation. It was only after I had learned to define myself in terms of consciousness that I came to appreciate the significance of the process by which I had become conscious of my self-relation to reality in the first place. To be conscious of reality is not to interact with it as if it were one of many objects. Reality, which is beyond being, is not susceptible to objectification. However, beings which are real, can be objectified. That is to say, all being is real, but not all reality is being. To assume that every entity is constituted as a self-contained necessity is to reject the possibility of any dynamic activity and remain within a static Hellenist mind-set. Rather, to be conscious of reality is to differentiate myself within it, by my becoming, by reflecting upon it inwardly and by experiencing it hylomorphically, as a unity of the tangible and the intangible.

In my understanding, then, when I create a “new” life-world and identity it is tantamount to transcending the “old” world. In undertaking a phenomenological approach to interpreting my experience, I have reached a level of self-consciousness and self-creativity that views the Hellenic dichotomy as an option not to be repeated. My consciousness presents itself when distinguishing between “me” and “not-me.” That is, I am distinguishable within the physical world of beings, and I distinguish myself to myself as part of the dynamic world of my becoming. As my consciousness is heightened, I continually differentiate myself within my life-world and grow as a person with a unique identity. As I differentiate myself from that which is not myself, my consciousness is also heightened. Thus, I am a self whose identity is disclosed when I differentiate myself from others. I am an entity which comes into being, and whose existence emerges through self-differentiation. In such self-differentiation I am contingent because I make myself “to be” within my environment, that is, I fashion myself creatively. The ultimate result of my consciousness is an awareness of my self-possession. In short, I assign myself an identity.

In creating my becoming, I encounter pre-determined (inherited) categories to which I assign meaning whether such

categories are pre-determined by the nature of the mind, as Kant thought, or by the nature of being, as the pre-Kantian philosophers thought. The truth or error in my understanding depends on the authenticity of the *relationship* between me, as subject, and the other, as object, and not on the accuracy of the intellectual *apprehension* of an object by me as a knowing subject. In short, I have dehellenized truth or error in my thinking.

The term dehellenization is not a negative term. That is, it is not un-hellenization. I experience dehellenization as the conscious creation of my life-world in a non-Hellenic fashion. Within my intellectual history I have come to understand that the task to which philosophy calls me is not the dismantling of traditional metaphysics and the reconstruction of a new metaphysics, but rather the transcending of any metaphysics reflecting dichotomous roots. That is, I have rejected traditional Hellenistic metaphysics in favour of a consciousness that lacks substantive ideals. Thus, I am intellectually at a non-Hellenistic, posthuman threshold of becoming.

It is understandable that St Thomas thought that the scholastic way of thinking was the only methodological way of thinking given his context. However, I am conscious of the fact that there is no necessary methodology for me to differentiate my becoming within reality and, as well, that no methodology of differentiating within reality is natural or privileged. My world is now one of increasing personal responsibility and my problem is one of finding an appropriate intellectual and philosophical methodology through which I may respond to my old (human) and new (posthuman) experience. A posthuman understanding has the capacity to incorporate my entire person through my senses, emotions, intellect, and will in the act of knowingly being conscious. As a consequence, I am conscious that my contingent human experience is not a total experience. I may overcome this insufficiency, however, via a holistic understanding which allows for something greater. When I incorporate my holistic experience my becoming equates to nothing less than my quest for ultimate meaning. In short, my quest for ultimate meaning is philosophically and theologically tantamount to my identity seeking understanding.

§

LIFTING THE SHADES ON KNOWLEDGE

19. A “CREED FOR LIFE”

I need a “creed of life” by which to live. In my experience, an unorganized life is not an option. An organized life is reflected in my creed of life and is the means by which I, as an agent, deliberately and consciously influence my environment. That being the case, from a theological point of view God is not the agent responsible for everything anymore — I have my part to play.

In playing my part, must I continue to rely on classical metaphysics to provide the answers to my philosophical questions? Perhaps science is the better option for me to “dis-cover” answers to my philosophical questions. But is it the most appropriate tool that I can use for discovery? Science describes the *how* of something but does not account for the *why* of something which, from my perspective, is ultimately a religious question. In contemporary scientific understanding, is the *how* of physical agency determined by necessity or is physical agency contingent? Philosophically, is the *why* an agency of an effect independent of an external force? In attempting to answer these questions, I opt for a phenomenological interpretation to interpret my “creed of life.” In a phenomenological interpretation I spare myself from unnecessary dichotomies when interpreting my experience. I hold that philosophy is not a goal in itself, but a means to life’s goals. In the past, my inherited knowledge (from either religion or science) had provided answers. Now personal philosophical interpretation of my experience provides an alternative means to obtain answers. I am my own agent in formulating a creed of life. My philosophy in formulating this creed of life cannot be divorced from the observation of myself in my environment. I am conscious of my unique personality affecting my understanding of the meaning of my life.

I am not a professional philosopher, but one who thinks about his experiences and gives them meaning. I am not a professional

scientist in the contemporary sense of the term, but merely an individual who senses that there is a correct and incorrect methodology to interpreting life's experiences. Whether I choose philosophy or science or a combination of the two to become the interpretive method in my life has yet to be settled. This present indeterminant status can be traced to the legacy of a previously accepted distinction between science and religion. However, there is no doubt in my mind that organic evolution (a scientific phenomenon) and the Christian faith (a philosophical stance) are not as incompatible as I once thought. To my mind, the traditional antagonism between science and religion can be replaced by a posthuman consciousness of their harmony. It no longer is a question of science doing away with religion leaving a void and no replacement for the spiritual life, but it is a question of the human agent actively harmonizing the two, religion and science. Before this can happen, however, a true and accurate understanding of the human being in its context must be achieved. That is to say, Western philosophers must become conscious of what it means sufficiently to be a person in classical philosophy. The person understood in the classical Hellenistic manner is not experienced as sufficient in a posthuman philosophy.

In humanistic philosophy, when in Western culture scholasticism was dominant, humanity was a *creature* made by God. In posthuman philosophy (in the waning of scholasticism) humanity becomes a *co-creator* with God in light of the portion of divinity within itself. It is not a question of there being no God in posthumanism. It is a question of where to place God in posthuman philosophical interpretation. In posthuman philosophy, this co-creator relationship is disclosed through a phenomenological interpretation of human consciousness, in lieu of the epistemological knowledge of Hellenistic philosophy. That is to say, as co-creator, humanity can reflexively contemplate itself, and reflectively contemplate ultimately the whole cosmos. Humans achieve this contemplative awareness by acting *con scientia*. Philosophically, such comprehension is a *holistic* understanding by which the knowing subject realizes itself as more and greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Religious activity within humanism will likely not be transplanted into posthumanism with satisfactory results. The past

“mistake” of viewing science and religious activity in conflict is an example of a state of affairs that most likely will not be retained in a posthuman context. Science might seem to be the desired option for the welfare of humanity in a posthuman context. It purports to describe the workings of the universe without the aid of religious knowledge. But can it account for the *origin* of matter without the aid of religious understanding? Granted that humanity has something of “that of God” within itself, the challenge becomes for philosophers how to discover this “that of God” in an individual’s experience of physical facts (not transcendental fantasy) in a posthuman context. For pure scientists this is a non-issue. In a classical context where religion dominated, science may have ended the tyranny of religion but it appears that science has failed to set up a corresponding republic of secular thought. *Laïcité* has yet to achieve its goal. The religious remains blended with the secular. This blended social situation is a challenge for posthuman philosophers since modern scientific interpretations conceal a rootedness in the religious interpretations of primitive experience. That is, scientific interpretations are interpretations that seem unsolvable, at present at least, without reference to some sort of non-religious equivalent to God consciousness, i.e., (Mother) Nature has a mind of (her) its own.

It is a philosophical mistake to think that myth is the enshrinement of ignorance and that the scientist is the high priest of “free thought” in an orderly universe. Customarily, regularity implies binding law as opposed to merely observable pattern. But is this an accurate understanding? Law implies necessity, yet we all experience this “lack of necessity” in our *regular* day-to-day lives. The question then arises: Is necessity itself a part of our regular day-to-day experience? If necessity characterizes human experience, we should be able to give a final answer to the question of how God must be, at least according to classical philosophy. However, in light of posthuman philosophy, and perhaps through the contingent experience of being, philosophers may legitimately give a provisional answer to, or re-cast the traditional answer to, the question of the reality concerning God. At this point the seasoned philosopher may want to cast a critical glance to past experience to avoid the interpretive mistakes of some interpretive predecessors. A posthuman future will need to be a

dehellenized future to bear fruit in Western philosophy. A Hellenized philosophy was conceived in a Hellenized culture, thus is not suitable for importation into a posthuman culture.

A concern for the religious philosopher is that of morality, by that I mean, the application of theological truth (religious activity) to the practical side of life. The classical philosophical approach to morality is not satisfactory for the posthuman Christian life. Application of secular truth (a scientific activity) to Christian life is an *ethical* problem for the human agent in assigning meaning to experience. The *moral* problem of more than one agent assigning meaning to human experience has been solved in hierarchical Christianity through dogmatic formulae based on a transcendental concept of God as defined by the Church's magisterium. In this regard, historically the Church had become the sole moral agent. In the physics of ancient science, physical "laws" depended upon sensible observation, not on pure logic. This sensible observation suggested knowledge beyond the physical, i.e., meta-physical knowledge. But the physics of ancient science was knowledge only of the "how" of such laws, not of the "why" of such laws. To my mind, modern innovations notwithstanding, science is not an *explanation* of "what is," only an *exploration* of "what is."

Posthuman philosophical knowledge, unlike traditional philosophical knowledge, is not allied with any institution, nor necessarily formulated by any cultural context or ideology. Rather, posthuman philosophical knowledge is more particularly and consciously related to the individual's consciousness of a "creed for life."

20. FOLLOWING THE COMPUTERIZED THREAD

In keeping with contemporary computer understanding, I ask the reader to keep the metaphor of a *computerized thread* in mind as he or she reads through the following section. What is a computerized thread, you may ask? Compare it to a digital code within a computer programme that relates a sequence of events with a beginning, and an end, and at any given moment shows a "trace" of what has been taking place, or how events have been occurring. Keep in mind that a thread is not the whole programme but only a part of the programme. To appreciate a computerized

thread in its role in constituting the whole programme, a thread must be examined and followed as to how it is interwoven. That is to say that a thread has a certain independence of its own within a programme, yet forming in combination with other threads, part of a particular programme. In the metaphor, the digital code (the sequence of identified events) works as a particular explanation within a particular programme.

The philosophical thread (code) that opened the window to my posthuman thinking began forming during my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto. Two professors from whom I took courses were probing into the philosophical and sociological significance of issues that Vatican II identified as pertinent to the Catholic faithful and all others “of good will.” Only later, did I appreciate how much these two professors, in different disciplines, agreed as each followed his particular interpretation of the Council. I speak of Leslie Dewart (1922-2009) and Gregory Baum (1923-2017). Baum wrote.

If I understand Leslie Dewart’s theory of doctrinal development correctly (*The Future of Belief*, Herder & Herder, 1966, pp. 96-121) I find that I come to the same conclusions, even if our methods of investigation have been quite different. Dewart insists that if the Church wants to be faithful to the Gospel, once-for-all received, in a new cultural age, she must ‘re-conceptualize’ it — or, in our terminology, re-focus and re-interpret it; if she simply repeats what she said in the past she will, in fact, no longer announce the same Gospel. This re-conceptualization is not achieved as the intellectual task of translating the creeds and doctrinal formulas into a new cultural and philosophical language. What must happen is something more original and creative. Dewart rightly insists that re-conceptualization is the faithful response of the Church to the divine Word addressed to her in the present. Divine revelation, though definitive and exhaustive in Jesus Christ — and from this point of view closed — continues in the Church: God continues to speak his self-identical Word in the Church. This on-going self-communication of God in his Word evokes the faith of the Church and thus constitutes her in her being as the community of the faithful. For Dewart, therefore, the re-conceptualization of divine revelation is a process by which the

Church, faithful to the apostolic witness and at home in a new cultural environment, responds in faith to the divine Word in her and to her. The re-conceptualization of revelation is the new self-consciousness of the Church.⁵²

It is fair to suggest, I believe, that were Dewart, a philosopher, asked if he agreed with Baum, a sociologist, in this regard at least, he would answer in the affirmative, especially concerning the church. The following quote, while not acknowledging Baum by name supports my suggestion, I think.

Belief must have a social and historical dimension, and man's religious development cannot take place in splendid isolation. We cannot reasonably expect private revelations for each or for any individual, any more than we can reasonably expect that scientific, philosophical or other truth will disclose itself to each man privately and individually. Philosophy and science [in which Dewart includes the social or "soft" sciences] can be practiced and cultivated and advanced only when there is a philosophical and scientific community in which the philosophical and scientific tradition is vested, a philosophical and scientific community to which the individual's contribution can be made. In a very real sense, likewise, Christian belief must be belief *in the Church*, and no apology need be made for the fact. For Christians the *Church* has always been as much an object of belief as God himself; (I say Church, not the papacy or the hierarchy or any other part of the Church).⁵³

Following the realization of the similarity between Dewart and Baum (concerning a new self-consciousness in the church) I undertook further studies into Dewart's philosophical perspective, while keeping Baum's sociological understanding in mind.⁵⁴ In

⁵² *The Credibility of the Church Today: A Reply to Charles Davis Herder & Herder* 1968:174. Charles Davis (1923-1999) was a high profile English Catholic theologian whose departure from the Church made international headlines at the time.

⁵³ *The Foundations of Belief* Herder & Herder 1969:452 [Dewart's italics].

⁵⁴ Such a practice by academics is not surprising. Baum wrote: "I could write about thinkers with whom I am linked in personal friendship – Aarne Siirala, Rosemary Ruether, Philip McKenna, Emil Fackenheim, Leslie Dewart – and

the later years of my career, it became apparent to me that the inadequacy of the traditional theological interpretation of the Church was taking a toll on the faith commitment of many Catholics who desired change, but were not sufficiently frustrated to the point of being forced to leave the Church.

Posthuman philosophical thought, to my mind, has its roots in humanity's cultural evolution, primitive or civilized. That is to say, in the perpetual interpretation of sense experience that is common to human beings (even though possibly superstitious) and in formal reasoned philosophical thinking. The philosophical thread in my thinking continues to expand and I have no idea as to when or where it will end. But I do know that it began with a suspicion of the irrelevance of classical philosophy in the modern techno-digital world. I suggest that a glimpse of the new posthuman reality will demonstrate the fact that human understanding is evolving objectively to a greater degree than it is evolving subjectively. That is, the understanding of physical evolution is out-pacing the understanding of the evolution of the mind. Contemporary Western philosophers have under-appreciated the subjective value of what it means to be human and have acquired (somewhat inaccurately, I believe) an objective understanding of posthumanity. Leslie Dewart expressed this insight when he wrote that "the frequent mechanization of human existence in civilized society amply demonstrates that it is possible for man to lose himself in his own objective meaning."⁵⁵

21. BECOMING CONSCIOUS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

I experience the presence of God at my present level of consciousness attained through mental maturity. Because I have dehellenized my philosophy I now live with an awareness of divergent notions of the God of Christian belief. Such divergent notions of God present philosophical challenges in formulating my theological understanding. One challenge has been to understand,

whose thought both challenges and supports me." *Journeys: The Impact of Personal experience on Religious Thought* Paulist Press 1975:31.

⁵⁵ *The Foundations of Belief* Herder & Herder 1969:435.

from a subjective point of view, that my self-fulfillment as a human being is intrinsically related to my capacity to live with divergent notions of God in my life-world. That is, what I make myself to be as a conscious subject, places me in a new relation to the presence of God.

The desire for self-fulfillment motivates my seeking “to be” creatively. Mere fulfillment, on the other hand, describes having accomplished a goal in life, but not necessarily creatively. Through self-fulfillment I do not simply seek the philosophical goal of happiness. Rather, I seek consciously to be creative within God’s presence. That is, in consciously constituting my “self” I creatively engage God’s word (speech, *logos*) in my life.

Among the first inherited beliefs that I recall rejecting in the evolution of my philosophical consciousness was the illusion that the Hellenic understanding of reality truly exists. The illusion that I reject is that reality must be conceived as being, or reality is not conceivable at all. Having rejected the notion that reality is restricted to being, I no longer need to equate intelligibility and necessity as Hellenist philosophers do. Intelligibility and necessity are qualitative predicates or attributes of the Hellenic concept of being, not of reality.

Being, or better becoming, is not static and precludes equating intelligibility and necessity. Becoming is an evolutionary activity within reality. If intelligibility and necessity are equated then a non-evolutionary idealistic philosophy must be adopted.

The development of my consciousness, concerning my everyday experience within the presence of God, requires that I dehellenize Christian dogmatic and doctrinal concepts. This dehellenization includes the self-conscious rejection of a philosophical viewpoint that is no longer appropriate, yet which remains formally accepted by many within contemporary culture. Such rejection is required in order to permit the acceptance of a new methodology for philosophical contemplation within a posthuman context. In other words, dehellenization is an activity of my self-conscious creative intellect.

I am aware that I have a personal history, which distinguishes me from other living human beings and their personal histories. Various philosophical traditions from early Hellenic times to modern times have suggested that humans are merely thinking

animals. Yet, I find that I myself exhibit a peculiar and unique consciousness that not all living species share. Further, I am a being who is capable of understanding myself to be present to myself. That is, I am aware of what is “not-me.” Being present to myself, constitutes my consciousness. The real difference between conscious (brute) animals and me is not that I possess a higher degree of knowledge. The real difference between (brute) animals and me is that I am able to act self-consciously and self-reflectively concerning the presence of God in my life.

A deepening consciousness is a form of human evolution. Such deepening of consciousness is the basic characteristic that ultimately reveals my capacity for transcendence. What is unique and distinctive about my capacity for transcendental consciousness, when compared to my capacity for temporal consciousness, is that my transcendental consciousness takes the form of a qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, experience. Thus, I recognize that qualitative enrichment occurs within my quantitative life-world. Thus, my evolution as a person is an activity in time. In fact, my consciousness discloses a qualitative awareness of reality which is beyond being, i.e., an awareness of relationships. In deepening (or heightening) my consciousness of such real relationships, I render myself conscious of that which has been present to me all along (i.e., God’s presence and that of others) and which I now recognize in a new light.

My experience has been that to know a thing better means to know more about the same thing which is common within Western traditional understanding. That is, knowledge has been conceived quantitatively, not qualitatively. This understanding became problematic when I understood that the closing of revelation, after the end of the New Testament era, meant that my Christian faith could not reach any new truths. The catechism teaches that the Trinity and Incarnation, new truths in themselves, were revealed within the Christian faith in relation to Judaism. Once I accepted that my Christian faith was complete, it could only increase through the multiplication of concepts *about* the faith that I already knew. However, this understanding did not conform to my experience. I did not experience God’s self-revelation in Jesus as a closed event of salvation history. I had no sense of being restricted to believing in a revelation that occurred in the past and that had

been completed in the past. Rather, I experienced living in the open-ended dynamic presence of God whose transcendent and novel presence was made intelligible in my day-to-day life.

I accept as historically accurate that the Hellenization of Christianity was a gradual transformation of earlier cultural forms into later ones. Hellenism is not the cultural form of the world today. It was, however, the cultural form of the ecumenical world of the apostolic and patristic ages. Throughout the apostolic and patristic ages, it was practically impossible to distinguish between the universalization of Christianity and the Hellenization of Christianity. In Hellenist philosophy, God is a transcendent being, *vis à vis* other beings. This is in contrast to the Hebraic philosophical view in which God is a presence similar to other presences populating the cosmos. In my consciousness, God's presence is that reality, other than being, which is present to being. Further, God's presence is that reality that makes my being "to be." Thus, my life comes-into-being in relation to God's presence which is present to me.

I have come to realize that I am, as a self-identified subject, a center of consciousness. Without succumbing to objectivism, I am an entity who can signify myself to myself objectively. In the early stages of my philosophical development, due to the influence of a modified Greek metaphysical understanding, I had accepted that there was an actual separation or dichotomy between essence and existence. I now espouse an alternate understanding, based on my experience, which does not accord with my previous Hellenistic understanding. My philosophical focus has shifted from a supposed dichotomy to a factual relationship.

As an existential thinker, my belief bears directly upon the factual relationship of God's presence to me and not upon words or concepts about God. God's presence is immediately revealed, (i.e., not mediated). That is to say, I intuit God's presence. My experience is that I am conscious of God's presence indirectly, not conscious of the presence of God directly. My consciousness of God's presence does not mean a union of me, the subjective knower, and the object that I intuit, that is, God. Rather, my consciousness of God's presence reveals a differentiation and individuation of myself from God's presence. Hence, I do not experience God in terms of a classical philosophical essence.

Rather, I experience God's presence as affecting my evolution within temporal existence. That is to say that God's presence is a "felt" presence as opposed to an objective presence.

I have rejected any understanding that posits a dichotomy between essence and existence in being and I have accepted that things need not exist necessarily. They could be other than what they presently are. Also, I accept that to exist and to be present are different realizations of my experience. There is present to me, beyond the physical, an unknown reality of which I am conscious, that when felt by me constitutes me more fully than I would be were I not exposed to its influence. That is, I experience it through a holistic consciousness. In short, I am conscious that I am more than the sum of my parts. A holistic consciousness does not burden me with having to prove that there actually exists a God. Rather, I am concerned with the disclosure of the (mysterious) reality of God's presence, to my consciousness. My concern is the reality of God's mysterious intangible presence, not of God's existence as a physical presence. In a holistic consciousness what is revealed to me, since it is not obvious to common sense, is God's presence, not God's existence. And, this presence of God is not that of Greek metaphysics.

Being conscious I can signify myself to myself. For me to be a subject, that is a person, is to be known to myself in God's presence. In my day-to-day life, as I dehellenize my Christian belief, I recast the meaning of faith in terms that do not imply God's dominion over me. In my current dehellenized understanding the perception of a supernatural, dominant being is not an intrinsic part of my Christian faith. What is now fundamental to my Christian faith is the consciousness of God's grace, that is, God's presence to me as the true gift (*donum*) of God.

As Western philosophy departs more and more from its Hellenic presuppositions, the concept of classical supernaturalism loses its usefulness for contemporary Christian belief. I experience this lack of usefulness on a daily basis. However, to this day, the mainstream of Catholic philosophy has remained scholastically inclined and hence somewhat unsympathetic to an understanding of the posthuman context. As a carry-over from humanism, I am existentially, not metaphysically, conscious of the grace of the

presence of God — a fact which cannot be discarded in posthuman theological philosophy.

God is not a being among other beings, but yet is present to humanity through other beings. That God is not a being similar to other beings, yet transcendent, may tempt some theologians to conclude that there is no God. Leslie Dewart faced such criticism when he suggested that the existence of a transcendent being is not rationally demonstrable. He replied:

Some of my critics appear to me to have misinterpreted my previous conclusions to this effect. I have not suggested that whereas the existence of a transcendent being is not demonstrable, the existence of a transcendent presence may be. Since in the context of my views transcendent presence means a reality other than being which is related to human experience in man's consciousness of empirically given being, the attempt to demonstrate the *existence* of such a presence would be self-contradictory. What I have proposed is that belief in God is reasonable and well-grounded in experience if it means not belief in a reality which *exists* in the presence of man yet cannot be experienced, but in a reality which is present to man in his experience of existing being. I have suggested, therefore, that God is better conceived as a reality which is *present to* being than as a reality which *is* being, that God's reality should be conceived in terms of *real presence* rather than in terms of *real being*. (The theology of the Eucharist is but one area of theological research where this philosophical approach may prove useful). [Dewart's italics] ⁵⁶

This consciousness of God's presence to me, however, does not result in a union of me and God. Rather, my consciousness of the presence of God comes about through my differentiation from and individuation within that reality — God. Paradoxically, God is "not-me," yet there is that of God in me. Differentiation is a process in which my existence within time means that I must consciously fashion myself, that is, differentiate myself within and from the reality of God. The posthuman presence of God is not the ideal presence of God as understood in Hellenistic metaphysics. The reality of the presence of God, which is beyond the physical, is

⁵⁶ *The Foundations of Belief* Herder & Herder 1969 p 442 (n. 60).

a notion of which I am conscious through the process of self-differentiation.

22. MY EVOLVING CONSCIOUS UNDERSTANDING

Within the course of my reflections for this book major cultural changes convinced me to accept that a new philosophical age has appeared in human history. This led me to recognize that I am an agent of some of these cultural changes, albeit of minimal influence.⁵⁷ As I matured, accepting my inherited philosophical culture became somewhat problematic for me which was particularly due to the influence of Vatican Council II in which I began to discern the presence of God through the understanding of the difference between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*.

One problem arising from the understanding of the difference between *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* is how to identify the status of the Christian individual within society, as opposed to the status of the individual within the Christian church. That is to say, the traditional understanding of the church prior to Vatican II which recognized an individual as “in” or “out” of the church became a challenge for theologians during and after the Council. It remains an open question as I understand it.

As a theologian, I can never complete my philosophical and theological tasks. However, in these tasks I need to embrace a philosophy that will assign the appropriate theological meaning of the presence of God for me. In my experience, the most appropriate philosophy to assign meaning is existential phenomenology. Existential phenomenology makes it possible for me to reflect upon myself and the presence of God in a manner that was not possible within scholastic philosophy.

Very few of the observations and concepts I am contemplating in this book are original. The fact is that most are not even new. What I am trying to accomplish here is the sort of task that philosophers have always undertaken. That is, to arrange ideas into

⁵⁷ I see myself as an agent in Auguste Sabatier’s (1897:285) sense: “The principle of causation, e.g., is not in things; it is in the mind, and it is the mind which spontaneously connects all phenomena.” *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion: Based on Psychology and History* George H. Doran.

an interconnected and insightful pattern of a personal, but not private, comprehensive and unconventional synthesis. In doing so, I have rejected the epistemology of scholastic philosophy and have substituted in its place human consciousness. By virtue of my “that was then; this is now” consciousness, I am aware of an evolutionary understanding of the world that was not available to the ancient Hellenist philosophers. However, there is nothing in my evolutionary consciousness that restricts its use to philosophy. Evolution is a defining characteristic of organic life. I re-create myself by adjusting to my environment through a phenomenological interpretation that foreshadows a posthuman understanding. It is characteristic of brute animal life that evolutionary adjustment to its environment is achieved through its senses. Unlike the brute animal, however, I adjust by relating myself to a world that I perceive as real, through my consciousness, although unknown. As well, I relate to myself, whom I perceive to be a conscious self. Further, I relate to other such selves, whom I perceive as beings who are in the process of becoming and who also perceive themselves as selves and me as a self.

I am a conscious centre within the universe. I do experience myself as part of a techno-digital, historical world. Thus, I am a participant in the life of this world. Classical Hellenist philosophies were created in response to different problems within a different world. Thus, they reflected the differing aspects of the human condition at that time. Contemporary existential philosophy, to which I subscribe, presents the possibility of a co-creative evolution of being and becoming in my world. To my mind, co-creative evolution is a global philosophical possibility. Within a co-creative evolution, at each new point of view, or new level of consciousness, humanity transcends its previous status. In this process of co-creative evolution, I note that there is nothing in the universe that tells me that the universe is organized to satisfy or fulfill my needs or preferences. I have no experience that any order or harmony of the universe is intended for my sake as a human being. Rather, as a co-creator within the universe, I structure the order and harmony of my world. Further, there cannot exist a parallel and distinct alternative world (cosmos). There is only one

world, the one in which I now live. It is in this world that I fashion my being through a process of conscious self-differentiation.

23. PRIVATE JUDGMENT: CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT

Private judgment, as a philosophical stance, had distinguished Protestant from Catholic theologians in the Reformation period. The latter were not in favour of it. To my mind, private judgment as a philosophical stance is no longer serviceable in distinguishing the Protestant from the Catholic. Today, both Protestants and Catholics, in freedom of conscience, exercise private judgment in their theological interpretation. In the Victorian era, a convert to Roman Catholicism,⁵⁸ George Tyrrell, (1861-1909), noted that the Protestant believer accepted scripture as given by God as the supreme authority. The Catholic believer, on the other hand, accepted the church as the supreme authority given by God. Today, however, both Protestant and Catholic believers challenge their respective supreme authorities, the scriptures or the church, and exercise private judgment within their denominational communities. That is to say that neither accepts their authorities' decisions without question. That Protestants and Catholics both exercise critical philosophical judgment is indicative of philosophical posthumanity. And in exercising a posthuman philosophical stance there is opportunity for conversion from classical philosophy to phenomenological philosophy.

It still is the case today that it is to charismatic Christianity as revealed in the New Testament, and not to the church as an institution, that the Protestant faithful generally look for enlightenment by the Christ. The Catholic faithful, on the other hand, generally continue to look for guidance and enlightenment by the Christ through the ecclesiastical institution as a charismatically gifted community. Others seek it in a charismatically gifted ecclesial community. The charismatic Christianity evident in the New Testament era reflected the initial

⁵⁸ M D Petre (1918:54) records that Tyrrell "had been an agnostic before he became a Catholic." *Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits* T. C. & E. C. Jack [Facsimile Publisher, India 2020].

period of inspiration and enchantment in the life of the faithful. As long as the conditions of individual inspiration and enchantment were effective and in force, there was no need to form a particular organization or government for the believing community to enable enlightenment by the Christ. Particular church government would appear later, as inspiration and enchantment waned and formal learning developed.

The scriptures, in which the Protestant faithful find their institutional roots, may be studied as any historical documents with the aid of textual criticism. Textual criticism discloses the literary conventions of the era in which the texts were written. In noting the history of literary conventions, George Tyrrell noted that philosophers do not ask if Socrates really said what Plato puts into his mouth. Rather, they ask: Is Plato's Socrates the true Socrates? Similarly: did Christ do or say all that the Fourth Gospel ascribes to him? Is the Christ of the gospels the true Christ? I can recall asking myself the same type of question in the early years of my philosophical career. I eventually concluded that the scriptures were not written as a chronological history and cannot be used as any sort of proof-text to establish the divinity of the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

It can be argued from the perspective of textual criticism that the New Testament has been consciously written to agree with the various Old Testament prophecies so as to present an *ad hominem* argument against the Jews in favour of Christ's Messiahship. However, it must be remembered that scientific criticism acting as an independent, disinterested and private investigator, cannot establish the truth of the scriptures. To establish the truth of the scriptures they must be interpreted theologically. Thus, it is safe to conclude that in a posthuman context private judgment will continue to be exercised by both the Protestant and Catholic.

24. CULTURE

In reflecting phenomenologically about my faith experience, I have come to understand that Christianity is not an abstraction. Nor is it an ideology. Thus, I abandoned these understandings and began to express my Christian belief through active relationships within the culture of my faith community.

The faith community in which I live is an historic reality, in the social, psychological and natural senses, but also in the ahistoric notion of the transcendent, the spiritual, and the supernatural. That makes, my faith community an historic reality in the holistic sense. To believe in the Judeo-Christian revelation is to believe that my existence is affected by certain events characterizing God's presence in the world. However, even though I am conscious of God's presence immanently and transcendentally, in my experience of becoming, what I have found to be very significant is the realization that all my experiences could have been other than what they were. I was not fully aware of the implications of this insight until I was exposed to Leslie Dewart's thinking on the same subject.

Prior to this stage of my philosophical development, I had not managed to formulate a satisfactory integration of Hellenic philosophical principles. I think that part of the reason for this failure was due to the fact that Hellenistic cultural principles were not merely unsatisfactory in interpreting my experience, but they were also foreign to my experience. In other words, my experience was not culturally Hellenistic. The philosophical and theological questions raised within my techno-digital western experience had little in common with the Hellenistic cultural and philosophical understanding, characteristic of an age that no longer existed. I recognized that an alternative approach to classical philosophical humanism was needed since the culture had changed.

The question of a posthuman interpretation replacing the waning Hellenistic interpretation is an existential, not theoretical question. Within a heightened posthuman consciousness, my existential understanding did yield satisfactory results. One result was that I was free from the burdensome and inordinate influence of Hellenistic philosophy which had once been dominant in my life. In my earlier years, I had assumed that culture, which included classical philosophy was somehow determined by pre-existing ideals. Today, however, my philosophical contemplation reveals

that contemporary Western culture is as indeterminate in its organization as are the individuals who create that culture. Culture is neither an abstraction, nor a fixed ideology. It is a dynamic activity reflecting humanity's presence. It is through the phenomenological philosophical approach that I am able to understand culture as evolving. That is, culture is an evolutionary product formed by the unique manner that human beings evolve.

25. EVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

An interesting philosophical distinction within Catholic theology is that of conceiving humanity as *homo faber* vis à vis that of conceiving humanity as *homo creator*. That is, humanity as maker vs. humanity as creator. My response to this distinction, however, is to understand myself as “a creator” and “a maker” in a posthuman sense, not a classical sense. The classical sense of understanding these terms is problematic due to modern technological limitations, whereas the posthuman sense is limited only by human creative consciousness. Thus, rather than simply receive my “tools” for existence. I pro-actively (and creatively) fabricate them to fit my life-world. As a creature reflecting the likeness and image of God, my human status is such that I am related to the presence of God as co-creator — a status I have no reason to believe is to be afforded to non-human animals. Thus, I rejected what I experienced to be an inadequate scholastic philosophy limiting me to the status of a mere creature. Instead, I have accepted a new philosophy in creating my life-world. In reflecting from a “that was then, this is now” perspective, I came to realize that an evolutionary philosophy was not available to the ancient Hellenist philosophers. In my life-world, however, this evolutionary philosophy remains a defining characteristic.

In this evolutionary philosophical process, I differentiate myself by adjusting to my life-world through a phenomenological attitude. It is a characteristic of sentient organisms that adjustment to their world is mediated through the senses. Further, in my life-world I not only sense others but I also relate to others whom I recognize as being themselves in the process of becoming, or evolving, and who conceive of themselves as selves and me as a self.

As an individual human being I am not the centre of the concrete universe. I do, however, experience myself as in an organically evolving world architecturally and techno-digitally designed for my supposed benefit. But I do participate in the cosmos as did the ancient Hellenist philosophers. Their cosmos, however, could not include the modern technological and evolutionary aspect of contemporary culture. Ancient Hellenist philosophers lived in a different world, one which lacked the modern advantage of evolutionary consciousness and technology. Hence, it could not be a posthuman world. They reflected on their cultural experience in their particular human context. Unlike the ancient Greek philosophers, however, contemporary phenomenological philosophers, myself included, reflect on our experience of directing the evolution of our being and our becoming within the cosmos. That is, the question thus becomes, what does it mean, “to be becoming or not to be becoming,” in the posthuman context?

As my consciousness develops, I am aware of a deepening of the knowledge of myself as a reflecting agent. A deepening of the knowledge of myself as a reflecting agent ultimately reveals the presence of transcendent reality (not transcendent being) that I recognize as the presence of God in whose image and likeness I am made. As well, a deepening of the knowledge of myself reveals a deepening of the knowledge of the presence of God. In short, the deeper my self-knowledge, the deeper my knowledge of the presence of God.

When I am conscious, I am aware of that which is physically real as an intelligible fact in time. But I am also aware of reality, not as any form of being (existence), which is within time. As my consciousness of transcendence increases, I subsequently realize what has always been present to me — and what I have come to recognize as life. Thus, because of my transcendental consciousness of life, I recognize a sharper, clearer, and nobler meaning to my life in the presence of God. This nobler meaning is not a once hidden, pre-existing meaning that is now revealed. Rather, this nobler meaning has evolved out of an earlier meaning that I had assigned unsatisfactorily, though unwittingly, to my life given my Hellenic inheritance. As it happens, I experience my

transcendent consciousness as a continuum of my qualitative self-knowledge that perpetually evolves in the presence of God.

Naturally, my theological understanding occurs within the experience of a particular religious context. Further, my theological interpretation reflects my belief. That is, I have a personal history which distinguishes me from other Christians and their personal histories, even though, as human, we all reflect the unique image and likeness of what it means to be human.

As I mentioned earlier, I was not satisfied within the Hellenic approach to understanding the transcendent reality within my life-world. I am satisfied, however, with my conscious and continuing attempts at self-differentiation within that mysterious transcendent reality that is “not-me,” yet, of which I am originally a part. My self-differentiation continues within that reality whereby my unique identity emerges and is present to others as well as myself. Thus, I continue to fabricate my identity concretely through self-differentiation which distinguishes me from other sentient beings. My personality is a manifestation of my unique self at any given stage of my conscious growth. For me, to be a concrete person, is to realize myself in God’s presence and to know that I make my presence present to God. Further, I experience myself as an entity who desires to go beyond my present self-understanding in order to deepen, in responsible freedom, my self-consciousness.

26. RESPONSIBLE FREEDOM

There are certain cultural constraints that determine my choices. Necessity, however, is not one of them. Events could have been other than they were. Yet, even within the limiting conditions of my life-world, I have the capacity to make them other than what they are. If my theological construction has any meaning and Christian value for me and my community, it is because I am trying to work out a proper relationship in order to live in responsible freedom. Responsible freedom is not license to do or believe whatever I desire. Responsible freedom is the freedom by which I respond and all that is real, or imaginary, and which, in fact, limits me. Living within responsible freedom, I can only respond to that of which I am conscious.

I have noticed that when Hellenistic philosophers claim to live in responsible freedom, they often presuppose a role for Fate. On the contrary, I am a believer not in Fate, but in creative freedom. In creative freedom, when I contemplate what I should do in organizing my life-world, I intend to include an understanding of what does not yet exist or is not yet present in my consciousness. That is, I allow for the possibility of future alternatives which the presence of God allows I incorporate such insight or vision through the philosophical interpretation of my life-world. In short, I contemplate for the notion of an “open” future as opposed to a “closed” future in my world.

As a free agent, I am able to contemplate philosophical issues before enacting upon them. Thus, I am truly responsible for my conduct. No one else is. There is no group or individual who can cancel out my freedom. I can, however, surrender my freedom. But in surrendering my freedom, I would become dehumanized, that is, I would act like a robot. My free choices arise out of a creative capacity which is uniquely a human power. I cannot, therefore, surrender governing myself reasonably and autonomously and still remain a free human agent. As a free human agent, I am a creatively constituted organism, physically and metaphysically. However, in my creative freedom, I do not undertake efforts to conform to an ideal order of reality as did Plato and Aristotle. In other words, through my philosophical contemplation, I have come to realize that I freely and responsibly organize my life-world as an incardinated, individuated and dehellenized human being.

27. POSTSCRIPT

Only after this book was near completion did I obtained a copy of *Leaves from the Note Book of an Unashamed Heretic* by Paul Trudinger. Paul had taught me at the University of Winnipeg in a postgraduate programme in theology which I never completed. I recall how “unorthodox” his approach to theological issues seemed to students. In hindsight, I believe he was undertaking his own version of a dehellenization process based on his experience. As the reader will no doubt have recognized, the dehellenization process I explored in this book was undertaken from within the Catholic Christian point of view. This is the tradition in which I

was educated and was taught to practice my faith. However, Christians of other traditions, like Paul Trudinger, often undertook a process of dehellenization in their religious lives without labeling it as such. Where I have focused on dehellenizing classical philosophy, Trudinger, a Quaker, focused on dehellenizing human experience. He wrote:

If I were pressed to say in one short statement how I would describe the shift in my thinking and convictions, I would say it was a movement away from a strong ‘Christocentric’ focus to the conviction that ‘God’ must always be at the center. ... In former days I would have hotly denied that having ‘God’ at the center required any weakening of my Christology. As I now understand things, my former Christocentric perspective carried with it particular constructions, interpretations, and understandings of ‘God’ — constructions which I now think, feel and believe to be unhelpful, and in many cases downright damaging, to our understanding of the relationship of God to humankind. I would not even call the shift one from a ‘Christocentric’ to a ‘Theocentric’ position, because God as Theos, that is, the classical theistic position carries with it a model of God which, I believe, fosters the ideas of domination, of triumphalism, of hierarchy, and of authoritarian attitudes. These I believe to be unhelpful in our present situation in history; in our current sensitivity to religious pluralism and multi-culturalism. I do not find such a view of God to be operative in my own spiritual experience of God personally speaking, nor in the context of the communities of faith when they are being faithful to Love’s presence and to the spirit of Jesus’ life and teaching.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Paul Trudinger (1988:60) *Leaves from the Notebook of an Unashamed Heretic*. Frye & Company

28. A CREED FOR POSTHUMAN BELIEF

My decision to compose and include a “creed for life” to conclude this venture was inspired by Maude Petre’s conclusions about the belief of a Modernist theologian in her time.⁶⁰ This creed, I think, encapsulates the unresolved issues I wrote about earlier in this essay. These issues are as significant today as they were when she wrote. Given my perspective in this book, to my mind, the creed describes a threshold of posthuman philosophical and theological consciousness available to the contemporary believer.

A POSTHUMAN CREED

I believe that Christianity is the highest form of religion and that in the historic Christ divinity was manifested.

I believe that God is manifested to humanity in diverse manners. I believe in the sacramental system, in prayer, in sacrifice, and obedience to rightful authority.

I believe in the church as a means, not an end, to eternal life. I believe in ecclesial authority as service imparted by the Spirit for and to the whole church.

I believe that doctrine has not been exhaustively comprehended and I believe the individual and the whole church takes part in an unending process of spiritual development.

I believe that I live in the church and the church lives in me and in no fixed form nor quantity, but as an outpouring of infinity.

⁶⁰ Petre, Maude (1918:216) *Modernism: Its Failure and Its Fruits* T.C. & E.C. Jack Ltd.

ABOUT the AUTHOR



EXAMINERS' REPORT:

Date: 1 July 2010

Reference: ASOI/07/2010

Student: Allan Maurice Savage

Degree: Doctor of Letters

The candidate presented a portfolio of publications for assessment accompanied by a critical commentary in line for the regulations for the degree entitled "Interdisciplinary Insights Applied within a Theological Context". The portfolio was extremely wide-ranging and included work principally in the area of theology and secondarily in the areas of philosophy and psychology.

[The list of previously granted credentials at degree level has been omitted.]

In addition to previous degree awards and ministerial appointments, the portfolio contained two testimonials from the Bishop of Algoma attesting to his appreciation and high regard for the candidate's work in ministry.

[The list of publications books, booklets and articles for evaluation has been omitted.]

The evidence of achievement in line with the Regulations for the granting of the degree of Doctor of Letters by published work was amply displayed. The high level and scope of the work undertaken was clearly evidenced and offered a contribution to scholarship that was both original and unusually broadly-based. It was clear that the candidate had thoroughly absorbed the corpus of existing thought in his chosen areas, and had shown himself to be both a cogent expositor of the scholarship of others and an original thinker in his own right.

The candidate supplied a detailed exegesis in his critical commentary that considered each submitted work in turn. The examiners greatly appreciated the role of this approach in clarifying the intentions, methodology and context of the works concerned. The candidate also

included a list of the libraries which have acquired at least one of his books. He concludes that “their acceptance tells me they determined that my books ‘have something to say’ of academic value to the university community and perhaps to the civic community at large.” The examiners endorse this conclusion and commend the work involved accordingly.

It is invidious and necessarily subjective to single out examples of particular work in a submission that was uniformly impressive, but the three books “A Phenomenological Understanding of Certain Liturgical Texts: The Anglican Collects for Advent and the Roman Catholic Collects for Lent”, “Faith, Hope and Charity as Character Traits in Adler’s Individual Psychology with Related Essays in Spirituality and Phenomenology” and “The Ecology: A ‘New to You’ View (An Orthodox Theological Ecology)” were held by the examiners to be of particular merit.

The examiners felt in summary that the submission was of an exemplary quality and reflected exceptional achievement over a sustained period of time. The award of a higher doctorate does not permit the conferral of marks of distinction, but in this case it was felt that the submission was such as to have merited this accolade were it to have been available.

Andrew Linley, D.D. (Convenor)
Vice-President and Director of Administrative Affairs
Percy Dearmer Professor of Liturgical Studies

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